

*Mr. W. H. Jones*



# Singapore Assignment

The Nippon Times



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# SINGAPORE ASSIGNMENT

By  
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THE NIPPON TIMES  
TOKYO, JAPAN





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On the historic day of February 15, 1942, Lieutenant-General Arthur E. Percival agreed to unconditional terms of surrender imposed by General Tomoyuki Yamashita, Supreme Commander of the Japanese Forces in Malai, at the Ford Plant. (Photo passed by the War Ministry)

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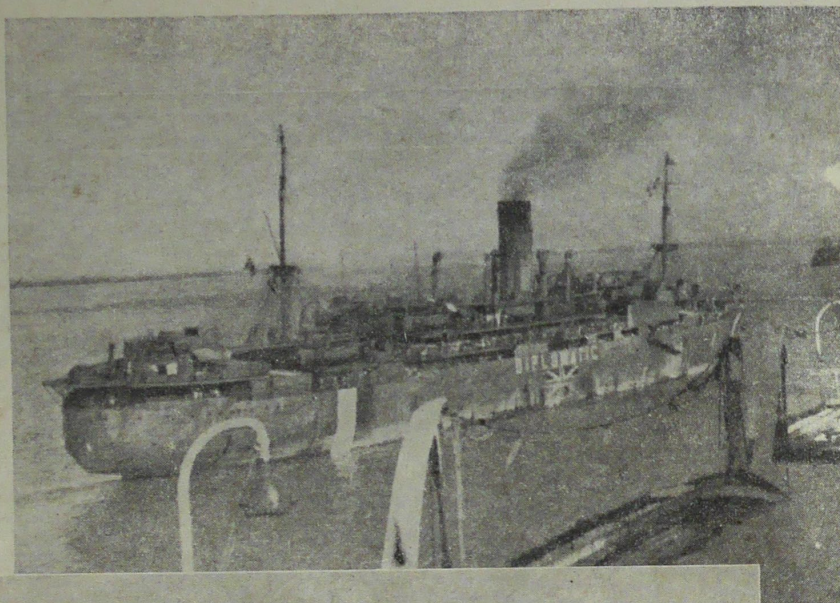


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Freed at last from British tyranny and oppression, people  
of Malai hail the Japanese as their long-awaited saviors.

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Above: Photo of the British exchange ship, El Nil, taken from the Tatuta Maru as she neared Lourenco Marques.

Below: Wilds shouts of uncontrollable joy rent the air as the Tatuta Maru, carrying Japanese internees, steamed into the port of Shonan on her way to Japan.

## FOREWORD

To look back on one's life in proper perspective is to say the least a hazardous task, particularly for one so young. In years to come, the past years may be viewed from another viewpoint through more mature eyes.

But the fact remains, I hope this is but the first of many more books to come. And in writing, as in other fields of human endeavor, there must be a beginning. Thus, it is with an apology that I present this book.

In the following pages, I have attempted to portray Singapore in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Greater East Asia War, with no attempt at literary polish or elaboration. It is merely a record of my experiences and general life in the once-British stronghold—symbolical of Anglo-American imperialism in the Far East.

As I write these lines, I recall the words of a college newspaper colleague who once ventured to predict that "ten years from now, you will probably be pounding out news copy on some battered typewriter." How true was his idle prophesy, for today I am still working on a newspaper, though far afield. My years in journalism have led me from college days to San Francisco, New York, Singapore and back to Tokyo.

Tokyo, Japan



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## SINGAPORE ASSIGNMENT

### INTRODUCTION

I flew across the country to San Francisco for a brief stop-over visit with my parents in California and I sailed from Los Angeles harbor shortly afterwards.

It was midnight when the Japanese ship cleared the harbor. As I stood on deck watching the fading lights of the California mainland recede, I resolutely turned by thoughts to the Orient.

Day by day, as the ship sailed nearer to Japan, I looked forward with great expectations for the land which I had left as a child.

Finally, Yokohama was sighted.

It was a cloudy day in March when the ship sailed in to the harbor. I cannot describe the feelings with which I surveyed the bustling scene before me.

All I thought was—it's good to be home.

Relatives and friends met me at the boat and took me to their home in Yokohama. And for the first time in 25 years, I spent the night in a Japanese home.

Early next morning when I looked out across the fields—a deep feeling of peace and comfort crept over me.

The next day, I travelled to Tokyo. After I paid homage to the Imperial Palace and worshipped at Meiji Shrine, I had my first 'good look at Tokyo. After calling at the Foreign Office and completing arrangements for my journey to Singapore, I spent the rest of my brief stay in Tokyo with friends.



Goro Murata of the Japan Times was good enough to take me to the Kabuki-za where they were showing a drama based on the life of the late Ambassador Hiroshi Saito.

As I watched the Saito drama unfold, I realized how Japan, ever sincere, extended her hand of friendship to the United States.

It was with this thought that I travelled on to Shanghai. There as my friends and I were returning from an evening of revelry I saw Japanese troops marching through the early morning mist. I was impressed with the discipline of Japanese troops—for this was the first glimpse that I had of Japan's invincible soldiers. Again at Garden Bridge, the doughty Japanese bluejacket and the natty Scottish Highlander served a vivid contrast. One was ready for action while the other was dressed as though for a party.

After brief stop-overs at Keelung and Hongkong where I was repeatedly impressed with Japan's remarkable virility and evidence of strength, I sailed on toward the Equator.

There were three glorious days in Saigon for our ship had made a call to load rice. There were a number of Japanese ships in the harbor, all busily loading cargo for other ports in East Asia, significant of Japan's economic activities. Then, down through the murky Saigon River, we sailed toward the southernmost tip of Asia—toward Singapore.

## CHAPTER I SLEEPING SINGAPORE

Singapore lay basking in the tropical sun when our ship sailed into the harbor on April 20, 1939. For hours that morning, I had stood on the deck waiting for the first glimpse of Singapore as the ship sailed serenely through blue waters between numerous green islands.

Finally, I caught a glimpse of the white buildings glinting in the sun. Singapore lay quietly asleep. How characteristic this was of Britain's fortress, I thought to myself.

Even before I disembarked, I was startled when the British Immigration Officer greeted me by name. It seemed that the police and even the newspaper reporters had been informed of my impending arrival.

Immediately upon landing, I was taken to the Police Station where I was questioned for more than an hour by Major Morgan, Chief of the Special Detective Branch. He asked me to give details of my trip from the United States, how long I had stayed in Japan and what I was going to do in Singapore.

Much to his disappointment, he learned very little from my replies. I told him that I had come to Singapore to work on the Singapore Herald. That was all I had to say.

He asked me regarding latest developments in Japan. I told him that I could tell him plenty about America but as for Japan "That's your business," I answered. I pointed to the Japanese newspapers and magazines lying on his desk.

Then I was taken to the Central Police Station where I was registered and an alien's permit issued to me. Whenever I wanted to go anywhere outside of Singapore even to Johore,



it would be necessary to obtain police permission, I was warned.

Singapore, on my arrival, was not a British city. It was predominantly Chinese with a good proportion of Indians, Malays and Arabs. The Japanese numbered only about 4,000. And yet the British ruled the destinies of the Asiatic population of 700,000 with selfish tyranny.

As in New Delhi, Hongkong and Shanghai, the British in Singapore had built imposing buildings in order to impress the masses. They had stationed troops in Malaya, not to fight, but to remind the Asiatics that the British ruled by virtue of force.

Bridges and roads were built not for public service, but solely for defense purposes. Schools were established in order that British history and language could be imposed upon the children. Hospitals and prisons were constructed because they were needed, not because of any humanitarian motive.

Wasn't it sufficient testimony of British oppression that the Supreme Court and the Changi Prison were the finest buildings in all of Malaya?

The British had come to Malai more than 100 years before. The Sultan of Johore had been forced to sell the island of Singapore to Sir Stamford Raffles, much as the American Indians were duped into selling Manhattan Island very cheaply.

Then, with Singapore as their base, and later with Malacca taken from the Dutch in exchange for Sumatra, and Penang founded by Sir Francis Light, the British gradually extended their domain.

Whenever a war broke out between the various Malay states, the British had stepped in and decided that they would rule. In this way, Britain seized political control over the Federated Malay States of Negri Sembilan, Selangor, Perak and Kelantan.

British residents were appointed to rule and the Malays

were only given nominal power in these states. As British power increased, the Unfederated States of Johore, Pahang, Trengannu, Kedah and Perlis were forced to sign treaties whereby they surrendered their independence in exchange for British advisers.

Shortly after my arrival in Singapore, I had occasion to have a long talk with a certain Malai Raja Muda. As a member of the royal family, he had been sent to Cambridge University for his education. Outwardly, he was supposed to be pro-British but he wasn't at heart.

This is what he had to say:

"The British came to Malaya at our invitation to help administer the country. Yet one by one they took over the native Malay states which were helpless in face of British strength. They ruined our country by economic exploitation and now that have the nerve to call this British Malaya. Why, Malaya is no more British than the color of your skin and mine."

The Raja Muda continued to vent his wrath against the British.

"The British force all sons of the Sultans to go to England to study so that we might acquire British habits of luxury. Begrudging the money which they provide us, they force us to visit London every so often so that their money will go right back into British pockets."

His attitude was typical of the intelligent Malays even before the war.

The Malays, by temperament easy going, were imposed upon. They tolerated the British and now they found that they had lost their country to the greedy British.

In the early days of British colonial domination, some good men had been sent out in the Malayan Civil Service. Names like Sir Frank Swettenham and Sir Hugh Clifford stand out in Malayan history. They were sincerely interested in the welfare of the people and its culture. Sons of good



families came out to Malaya, in those early days, as hardy pioneers in quest of adventure and fortune.

But as years went on, London grew lax and the social and economic misfits of the British Isles began to drift out to Malaya. There was nothing so obnoxious as a British colonial official.

This really marked the decline of the British Empire in the Far East. The Greater East Asia War merely hastened its eventual collapse. Obese John Bull, growing fat beneath the vest, exploiting the natural resources of this land, spent less and less time on administration and more on the pseudo-society which grew up around Singapore.

The poverty of the people increased the longer the British remained in Malaya. The slums of Singapore were world famous and in the midst of all this poverty and filth, the British lived in oblivious splendor.

Life in Singapore for the British was leisurely and comfortable. Most of them lived in the suburbs—Tanglin, Bukit Timah or along the East Coast—where it was cool. They built magnificent residences staffed with a retinue of Chinese and Malai servants.

Yes, Singapore was easy and comfortable for the middle-class English officials and businessmen. Many of the wives sprang from the petty bourgeoisie of England and Scotland. Many a police inspector had formerly walked the streets of London as a "bobbie" while more than one railway official had served his apprenticeship in an English dispatcher's office.

Scrubwomen, farmer's daughters and manicurists—all became Singapore "ladies." Many told amazing stories of aristocratic backgrounds which were refuted by the Cockney in their speech.

When Noel Coward, the celebrated English playwright and author, came out to Singapore, he was amazed at the smug, pretentious and bad manners of Singapore society.

After a visit to the Tanglin Club, one would-be lady asked him how he liked the Club.

"You know the Tanglin Club is one of our best clubs," the "lady" beamed.

Noel Coward turned to her and said, "After meeting your best people, now I know why there is such a shortage of servants in London."

Indeed, the British built up a life of superficial leisure in Singapore. While they drew handsome salaries and did no work, the efficient Chinese and Eurasian clerks slaved. It was only necessary for the British manager to make an appearance every day, sign the checks and dictate replies to letters that came from the head office in London.

The British rolled through town in limousines, lived in sumptuous villas and revelled at exclusive clubs while the rest of the Asiatic population starved, toiled, and died.

Even the young assistants lived well—usually in an apartment or a bachelors' mess which resembled a private club. All of the British managers and most of the younger assistants owned motor-cars driven by Malai chauffeurs. Their domestic needs were taken care of by a Malai or Chinese houseboy, Chinese cook, Malai gardener and a Chinese amah to do the laundry.

They drove to the office about nine or ten every morning, had lunch at 1 p.m. and retired to the club at 4 or 5 p.m. In the meantime, they often stepped out to Robinson's or John Little's for a cup of coffee or, more often, a gin bitter.

For their exclusive pleasures, there were the Singapore Club, Cricket Club, Swimming Club and the various private golf clubs—topped by the swanky Royal Singapore Golf Course at Bukit Timah. They played golf, tennis, or just swam. If they were too lazy to do that, they went to the Padang, Anson Road Stadium or Jalan Besar Stadium to watch Malai, Chinese or Eurasian teams competing in typically British sports like hockey, cricket, and soccer-football.



In the evenings, these lazy British bathed and after changing to evening dress, they congregated at the Swimming Club, at the Cathay, Raffles or the Coconut Grove for dinner and for dancing. Very seldom, the British stayed at home—and if so, they only entertained intimate friends or business associates.

There were the cinemas—usually a British film at the Pavilion while the Cathay, Alhambra and the Capitol presented American films. It was such good entertainment for the British and excellent propaganda for the Asiatics, the British said.

For the younger bachelors, life in Singapore was very convenient. They usually started drinking at the Cricket Club, proceeded on to one of the three cabarets where they danced with a pretty Chinese or Eurasian partner and ended up at the cafes which lined Jalan Besar Road and Lavender Street. If the favors of certain dancers at the cabarets were unobtainable, they went along to one of the numerous brothels which served just as well.

And well after midnight, the trek from the clubs, the cabarets and cafes began—the British were going home to sleep. "It would be such a busy day tomorrow."

Weekends were spent at the Swimming Club which stayed open until 4 a.m. Then there were sports and orgies at the shore where many had erected weekend bungalows. They usually stocked up with lots of tinned provisions, plenty of beer and whiskey, a Chinese houseboy and enough girls to go around—drove out on Saturday evening and returned Monday morning. Sometimes, they would motor out to Johore where they could stay at one of the many Rest Houses.

Holidays were spent at Port Dickson, Cameron Highlands or Fraser's Hill. The high altitude was so restful and besides they could dance and drink with more comfort.

Many of the bachelors didn't bother to get married—

they forced themselves upon a Chinese or Eurasian girl. One paid from \$60 to \$150 and you would be surprised at the service you got, they would say.

That was why the convents were so crowded in Singapore—not with orphans but British bastards.

So much for the British. The rest of the population, the Singapore-born Chinese, the Indians, Malays and Arabs lived on the outer fringes of society.

There were some rich Asiatics—like Aw Boon Haw, Ong Peng Hocks, Elias, Namazie Asakoff, Alkaff and others—but in the main they merely imitated British habits. They also drove big motor-cars, erected magnificent homes and entertained at Raffles, Cathay or at the cabarets, but only because they made their money from the British and knew of no other way to spend it.

But the rest of the population—the Indians and the Chinese eked out a bare livelihood on \$20 or \$30 a month. The average monthly salary paid to an efficient clerk usually hovered between \$50 to \$75, while the lowest that an English employee could be paid was \$400, and ranging up to \$2,000 a month.

The Asiatic population was fed on American films and encouraged to cultivate luxuries—because it helped pay for European extravagance. The more local people ate Sydney Rock Oysters and strawberries brought by airplane from Australia, the cheaper it would be for the British. Every conceivable delicacy was available at the Singapore Cold Storage, or John Little's. The best cuts of meat and the choicest vegetables were on sale at these stores which catered chiefly to the British and rich Asiatics. The scraps were sold in the open market for the rest of the population.

The British encouraged the Asiatics to buy on installments and extended credit—they merely got into debt and thus the British got a tighter economic grip on the population. Indian moneylenders and Chinese pawnshops flourished



because of these Anglo-American habits of unlimited credit and installment buying.

The British were sticklers for dress and the poor clerical slaves were forced to wear regimented uniforms of tropical drill in the office. To the thousands of clerks, clothes alone took the major share of their salary—but the British merely shrugged their shoulders and ignored repeated complaints.

Singapore was a British possession and in all social aspects, this was driven home. The rest of the population, be it the native Malays, predominant Chinese, influential Indians or respected Japanese, did not count in British Malaya's social rankings.

The exclusive clubs, the Tanglin Club, the Royal Singapore Golf Club and the Singapore Swimming Club all barred their doors to the Asiatics.

Incompetence, red-tape inefficiency and general insolence marked British officialdom in pre-war Singapore. Truly, the British had carved out a century-long record of intolerance and domination in the peaceful city of the South. Years of oppression made the Asiatic population bitter and vindictive. But years of British rule taught respect for Britain's might—they were helpless in the face of the mercenary Scottish and Indian troops that were always stationed at Alexandria and Changi barracks.

Britain never forgot the Indian Mutiny of 1915 when the Sepoys rose in rebellion against the British. Now Britain maintains a garrison of loyal Scots and the Gurkas from Nepal.

Beneath its seemingly peaceful surface, all Malaya seethed with unrest. Malays and Chinese alike were openly resentful of the British overlord.

One day, I caught my Malai driver just as he was about to hit a young British journalist who was riding in the car. It seemed that the journalist-friend had presumptuously upbraided him for his driving.

"I don't work for him, I work for you. Besides, he's English—I'll kill him," was his threat. Quiet and peace-loving, this Malai, like thousands of his countryfolk, had never quite forgiven the British for robbing them of country and home.

During a heated argument with an Australian officer who had entered the house, I found myself grappling on the floor with the drunken soldier. Suddenly, I saw my Chinese houseboy approach stealthily with an upraised butcher knife.

Had I not stopped him in time, there would have been one less Australian soldier that night.

"He kill you, I kill him" was the simple explanation of the loyal Chinese boy.

And yet life in Singapore had its pleasant aspects. Among the various international sports events was the annual baseball series between the Japanese and American teams.

The American Consul-General, Kenneth Patton, spent most of his personal time and money in efforts to build up a strong baseball nine—and it was only just before the war that the Americans succeeded in beating the Japanese team, decimated by evacuation. After nine years of competition, the American Consul-General had achieved his ambition—but how hollow was the baseball victory in the light of subsequent military defeats!

The American Consul-General was always in—when I called with regard to some arrangements for the baseball league. In addition to the Japanese and Americans, there was the R.A.F. nine, Filipino Club and the Australians.

Sunday after Sunday, the American Consul-General sat on the sidelines, keeping score and managing his beloved American team.

Consul-General Patton was an easy-going gentleman from Virginia. Like his colleague, the U.S. Minister Grant in Bangkok, he had been appointed to the post while Singapore



was still a diplomatic blind-alley. Someone in the State Department had appointed Patton, like Grant in Thailand, and had forgotten all about him. When the clouds of war grew ominous, it was too late to recall him. One of the United States' weaknesses was the incapability of its key diplomats in Singapore and Bangkok to cope with the situation. Willys Deck was appointed to Bangkok but too late to remedy the harm done by Grant. Deck, a veteran diplomat, travelled on the South Pan-American Clipper with Alfred Duff Cooper late in October.

The American Colony of 200, while like the British in mode of living, still had an element of tolerant understanding.

An American manager of the Goodyear Rubber Company once told me:

"How I hate this life in Singapore. In Akron, Ohio, I could live a simple life—catch the 8:40 to work every morning, go to the pictures in the evening and see baseball games on Sunday. Here in Singapore, my wife has to go out dancing every other night. We must have six servants and a new motor-car every year.

"It's a good thing the company pays my boat passage, otherwise I'd never be able to get home. I'm up to my neck in debt and I'll sure be glad when I get out of this snobbish British society."

The years in Singapore were indeed an education for me. The more I saw of British life, the more I learned to hate their smug arrogance. The Americans that I had known in my childhood were narrow-minded and prejudiced but the British in Singapore were ten times worse.

My busy schedule in pre-war Singapore had its compensations. I made many friends at the Japanese Club, in golf and in business associations. Most of them sympathized with my struggle to learn the Japanese way of thinking.

Consul-General Issaku Okamoto invited me to his residence. Then Consul-General Kaoru Toyoda (now Shonan's deputy mayor) who followed, continued the close association between the diplomats and the journalists. It was during his time that I became managing editor of the Singapore Herald.

Consul-General Ken Tsurumi (now Governor of Malacca State) brought to Singapore his wide experience as Japanese Embassy Spokesman in Shanghai.

Japanese newspaper correspondents were always staunch friends and willing advisers in the editing of the Singapore Herald. I had travelled on the boat to Singapore with Mr. Katsutaro Suganuma, the Osaka Mainichi correspondent, and throughout the years in Singapore, he remained a constant and helpful adviser. Mr. Takashi Kaite, the Domei correspondent, in his capacity as manager of the Eastern News Service, was my superior in my work there. He was the latest of the Japanese correspondents to come to Singapore, succeeding Mr. Ishiro Kobayashi who had been jailed by British authorities as an aftermath of the Cox incident.

But in those trying years of tribulation and psychological adjustment from American to the Japanese point-of-view, it was Mr. Jun Ninomiya, the Asahi correspondent, who stood with me through thick and thin. During the year that I lived with him, he came to understand my problems and I firmly believe that it was that understanding which finally brought shape to my beliefs and convictions. Then there was Dr. Kozo Ando, who as physician and friend, was helpful to me in those pre-war Singapore days. (Dr. Ando is now Chief Medical Officer, Special Municipality.)

For two years and eight months, I had worked in Singapore with the Japanese, learning Japanese ways and philosophy—and what was most important, the mission of Greater East Asia.



## CHAPTER II

### OUTWITTING THE BRITISH

The Singapore Herald first appeared on the streets on April 11, 1939, with a news-beat—Mussolini had marched into Albania. This scoop, obtained through the wire facilities of the international News Service, symbolized the brief but colorful career of the newspaper, for it established a record of outstanding scoops.

But International News Service facilities were available for only 24 hours. Immediately after the news-scoop, Reuters, which had hitherto maintained a strict news monopoly in Singapore, swung into action in London and as a consequence, International News Service was forced to cancel their contract with the Herald after the first day. Reuters, stodgy slow official British news service, was all we had. Even the Domei News Service was not allowed in Singapore, but there was an Eastern News Service put out jointly by Domei and the Japanese Consulate-General. This helped us greatly in obtaining East Asia news for our newspaper.

The Singapore Herald was housed in a three-storeyed building on Robinson Road next to a Chinese newspaper and just down the road from the Malaya Tribune while the Straits Times was on the next street behind us.

The publisher of the newspaper was Shohei Nagao, who was editor and publisher as well of the Japanese newspaper, Singapore Nippon. In addition to another Japanese and myself, the rest of the staff was composed of one Englishman as sub-editor, Eurasian, Chinese and

Indian reporters and Malai copy-boys.

In the composing room, there were Tamil Indian linotype operators, Singhalese (Ceylon), compositors, a Chinese printer, a Malai engineer and a Ceylonese foreman. The Singapore Herald staff had been carefully selected—every nationality was represented.

There were only two linotype machines originally, although we purchased two more later. There was a flat-bed press and a rotary machine purchased from Japan. As for equipment, while initially we had very little, slowly we acquired more, so that just before the outbreak of the Greater East Asia War, the Singapore Herald was fully equipped to put out a good eight-page newspaper.

In addition there was sufficient news-print stock, and after the war had swept through Norway, additional newspaper had been purchased from Canada so that we had enough stock on hand for two years. (This certainly proved useful after the Japanese occupied Singapore. Immediately after declaration of war, the British had auctioned all our stock and equipment which was purchased by the Straits Times. And after my return to new-born Shonan, I became editor of the Shonan Shimbun's English edition, I found my stock and equipment still there. Such are the queer circumstances of this war).

In the spring of 1939, there were four other English newspapers in Singapore. The Malaya Tribune published an afternoon edition every day and a Morning Tribune.

Then there was the erstwhile aristocrat of the Singapore newspaper world—the Straits Times which appeared every weekday afternoon with its affiliates, the Sunday Times and the morning Singapore Free Press. The Singapore Free Press had formerly been a vigorous independent newspaper but had been bought out by the heavily-subsidized Straits Times.



The Straits Times was owned by the British business interests in Singapore—much as the Calcutta Statesman represented the capitalists in India and the North China Daily News reflected the selfish interests of the Shanghai taipans. Most of the editorials in the Straits Times, although written by the editor and publisher, George W. Seabridge, were in reality discussed and planned at the Singapore Club by the representatives of the big British business represented in Malaya—the tin, rubber and importing firms.

Thus, it often happened that the opinions as expressed in the Straits Times did not always express official British views, whereas the Singapore Free Press always tried to reflect the opinions of London.

The Malaya Tribune and the Morning Tribune had originally been launched as a locally-owned enterprise with Chinese and Eurasian capital. But, due to a series of incompetent managers, the Malaya Tribune had never made money. Consequently it fell prey to the business acumen of a group of Jews who invested heavily in the red-ink newspaper and who installed a Jewish general manager E. M. Glover, who was not a newspaperman but a Jewish entrepreneur, a fact which was clearly apparent in its policies.

Chinese capital remained in the Tribune Company but as soon as one of the Chinese wanted to sell out, the Jews were ready to buy. However, it was the Chinese capital that remained, coupled with Jewish greed that made the Malaya Tribune prostitute itself to Chungking propaganda.

On the whole, the Malaya Tribune was a poorly edited newspaper. In its endeavor to please both its Jewish management and Chungking support, the Tribune was at best a cheap, sensational journal.

There were only one or two British journalists on the

Tribune staff and two young Chinese who had been to Chungking. They plastered the newspaper with inaccurate Central News reports. The rest of the staff were made up of Chinese, Eurasians and Indians.

Thus, with the British interests firmly entrenched in the Straits Times—Singapore Free Press combine, the Singapore Herald saw its golden opportunity to push the Tribune group, with its insidious Chungking propaganda, off the streets.

That was why the Singapore Herald had been founded, to balance the lopsided propaganda regarding the China Affair which appeared to counter the British opinion expressed in the Times and Free Press.

The Singapore newspaper war was on.

The Straits Times had greeted the first edition of the Singapore Herald with a thundering editorial denouncing the Japanese "invasion" into Singapore. Their editor condemned what he called a Japanese propaganda newspaper coming into Malaya.

The Singapore Herald countered with an editorial explaining that its purpose was to present a newspaper to the Singapore public unbiased and fair in its presentation of news. We impressed the public and our contemporaries with the fact that there was ample room for another newspaper in Singapore.

Soon Transocean, Stefani and Havas news services were added to our news facilities while, from time to time, articles of interest were sent by the German and Italian consulates. However, this arrangement was terminated upon the outbreak of war in Europe.

With Britain's declaration of war on Germany, public interest in newspapers soared. The Singapore Herald was usually first on the streets with a war news extra, and, consequently the street sales of the newspaper began to mount.



It was about this time that the Singapore Herald scooped its competitors and officialdom with an interesting news item.

This is how it happened.

Immediately upon the outbreak of the war in Europe, the Asahi Shimbun and the Osaka Mainichi negotiated for newsreel films of the war through their representatives in London. I was asked by the Mainichi correspondent in Singapore to act as interpreter when he met a certain Mr. Scott of the British Foreign Office who was bringing the newsreel films to Singapore by air. Learning that the party in question was staying at Government House, I telephoned him and he agreed to come to the Japanese hotel.

At the appointed hour, the Governor's limousine with the British Crown plainly marked and two liveried chauffeurs, rolled up in front of the hotel. At that time, the fact that this Scott stayed with the Governor and had use of the Governor's private motor-car made me realize that Scott must be some one of importance. Visiting cards were exchanged and I noted with surprise that R. H. Scott was Director-General, Far Eastern Bureau of the British Ministry of Information.

After the necessary negotiations had been completed with regard to the news films for the Osaka Mainichi, I asked him regarding his work. Scott said that he had just come out to build up the British Ministry of Information organization in the Far East and that he would travel on to Hongkong, Shanghai and Tokyo. He intimated that he would establish his headquarters either at Hongkong or Singapore where he would direct activities.

(Later I confirmed that this same Scott was the chief of Britain's extensive espionage system in the Far East. In Tokyo, Vere Redman was the chief agent who was directed by Scott and all information gleaned by Scott's agents in Shanghai, Hongkong and Tokyo was reported to

Singapore.)

He consented to pose for a news picture when I told him I would like to write an article concerning his work. The story and picture were spread in the next edition of the Singapore Herald. Meanwhile, R. H. Scott had already left for Hongkong by plane.

Then the fireworks started. Telephone calls kept coming in. Rival reporters, the Press Censor and the Director of the Singapore Department of Information telephoned.

Director Peet of the Department of Information confessed that the editor of the Straits Times had been furious because the Singapore Herald had scored a news-beat on the Scott story.

It was still an official secret—this story of the Ministry of Information in the Far East, Peet said, and he intimated that the Singapore Herald had gotten into some serious trouble.

How is it, I asked him, that Scott had allowed me to interview him and even posed for a news photo? If Scott had been willing to even talk to a Japanese newspaperman, it couldn't be an official secret—Scott had even given his consent. Write to Scott in Hongkong for verification, I told him. To the Press Censor, I repeated the same facts.

Returning to the office, I wrote post-haste to Scott, informing him of the developments and the narrow-mindedness of the British press who wanted to stir up trouble because they had been scooped. I even enclosed a clipping of the item and his picture. I received no reply from Scott directly but in two or three days, the Director of Information called on the telephone and asked me to call at his office.

Peet, former Straits Times assistant editor, apologised for the misunderstanding and assured me that there was nothing wrong. Evidently, Scott had put things right with the Singapore officials. Peet, even congratulated me on the



news-beat that I had scored over the Straits Times.

This was just one incident in which the Herald had outwitted the British rivals. These scoops continued to boost the street sales of the Singapore Herald.

Shortly afterwards, I took complete charge of the newspaper as managing editor. In order to enable the newspaper to serve the Japanese more usefully, it must put more emphasis on East Asia news, I determined.

One of my first acts was to fire the incompetent Englishman—who immediately went over to the Malaya Tribune. The Straits Times and Malaya Tribune were raided for some good Asiatic newspapermen, for I wanted a bigger, better staff. Finally, the services of a Burmese, Ceylonese Eurasian and a Singapore-born Chinese were obtained. They all liked the all-Asiatic policy of the Singapore Herald, for they had had bitter experiences with prejudice and discrimination on the Tribune and Times.

Thus reinforced, the Herald launched a more vigorous, more pro-Japanese policy. A series of conferences with the Press Censor followed. I talked with the Director of Information. Objection had been raised in certain quarters concerning the handling and play-up of war news but I convinced them that I had done nothing wrong.

Then began a bitter period of out-and-out rivalry between the fast-rising Singapore Herald, the Malaya Tribune and the Straits Times. In news, and in sales, the three newspapers were fighting hard.

The Singapore Herald had proved popular with the British soldiers and sailors since the three-cent price was within range of the enlisted man's pay. Furthermore, since the Singapore Herald as the only evening newspaper had later news, it appealed to the crowds, both military and civilian, who came into town to the cinemas and restaurants.

One of the business staff was an alert Malai-born Chinese who obtained a permit for news-venders to go into the

army barracks to sell the Singapore Herald. In addition, although wartime regulations were being enforced, a permit was obtained for Herald newsboys to go into the Singapore Harbor Board area, prohibited to the general public. Thus to incoming troops, the Singapore Herald was the first English newspaper that greeted them on their arrival.

Fearing our growing-popularity, especially among the British soldiers, the Straits Times then perpetrated the first of the dastardly blows directed against the newspaper. They had appeared with an editorial in which they accused the military authorities of allowing a Japanese-owned propaganda newspaper to circulate among the British soldiers. The British Commander-in-Chief denied the Straits Times allegations in an official letter to the editor. Then, by a ruse, the Straits Times obtained the permit carried by the Herald newsboy in order to gain admission into the Alexandria barracks. They made a photograph of the pass and a facsimile appeared in the next edition of the Straits Times together with the letter from the Commander-in-Chief denying that the Singapore Herald had permission to go into the barracks and the harbor defense areas. Confronted with this, the British officials had no alternative than to cancel the permit.

However, the Singapore Herald was not beaten. We continued to outwit the British and the Straits Times at every opportunity.

During the Anglo-French defense conference which was held in Singapore, there was the strictest restriction on news and particularly on photographs of the conference. Official announcements and photographs would be released after the conference, the Press had been informed.

One day, a Chinese newspaper friend revealed that there was a British officer who was peddling pictures of the defense conference but that his newspaper was afraid to use them. This officer, who turned out to be Lieutenant



Dobbie, Aide-de-Camp to his father, Major-General Dobbie, then General Officer Commanding British Troops in Malaya, was only too glad to let us see the photos. It seemed that his hobby was photography and he had taken some good pictures of the defense conference and thought that the newspapers would be interested.

The whole lot was immediately purchased and he was told to get more pictures, that we would buy them all. He gave his assurance that there would be no difficulty with the censors and so the next day the Singapore Herald splashed three pictures of the actual conference while the Straits Times had only the pictures of the French officials who were present.

What angered the Straits Times more than anything was the fact that they knew how the Singapore Herald had obtained the pictures but then could not expose the G.O.C. and his son to public ridicule. We had them there.

When Hitler launched his Western offensive against the lowlands, the Singapore Herald beat the Straits Times and the Malaya Tribune to the streets by more than an hour and 15 minutes. It so happened that the news broke late in the afternoon. Both the Straits Times and the Malaya Tribune appeared on the streets at noon while the Singapore Herald came out around 3 p.m.

On that particular day, the Singapore Herald had just gone to press when the news of the great German offensive was flashed by Reuters. Immediately the press was stopped and the Herald appeared with a streamer headline and the brief flash announcing that Hitler had marched into Belgium and that the great German offensive on the Western Front had been launched. In fifteen minutes, the paper was ready and on the streets. The newsboys were instructed to go to the section of town where the Dutch business firms were concentrated. Some of them read the news with a gasp—it was the first news that they had. The

Hollanders bought all the newspapers that we could print—and woefully enough it was one hour and 15 minutes before the competitors could get on the streets.

The staff of both the Malaya Tribune and the Straits Times had gone home for the day and there was no-one in the office with authority to order publication. By the time the editor had been located drinking at one of the clubs and had rushed down to the office, the Singapore Herald extra was out on the streets.

The biggest Singapore Herald news beat was the occasion when it scooped the British Ministry of Information on an interview with Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, who had just arrived in Singapore, to be British Commander-in-Chief, Far East.

His arrival had been covered with news photographers and a host of reporters. Immediately upon his arrival, the Herald's chief reporter was sent to the Services Publicity Bureau with a request for an interview with Brooke-Popham. The reporter was referred to a secretary. On making his request, the reporter was told that he would have to wait his turn. His application would be filed in order.

The next day, Brooke-Popham settled down to office routine and on the calendar was the request by the Singapore Herald for an interview. He granted the interview, not knowing, of course, that the Herald was a Japanese-owned newspaper.

The chief reporter had been well-coached on the questions he was to ask the Commander-in-Chief, and so in the ten minute interview, Brooke-Popham told the Singapore Herald that although he was a soldier by profession he was not looking for trouble. If any enemy sought to attack Malaya, then his duties were clear but he hoped that there would be peace in the Far East.

That was enough.



The Singapore Herald had delayed publication for the Brooke-Popham interview and we gave it all it was worth. "Brooke-Popham Wants Peace in Far East" was the headline in the Singapore Herald. The foreign correspondents and news agencies flashed this news throughout the world.

The next day, the elaborately-prepared official Brooke-Popham statement was issued by the Ministry of Information which declared that the defenses of Singapore were ready for any attack.

But the damage had already been done.

While Brooke-Popham proved a good source of information to the Press as a whole, Vice-Admiral Geoffrey Layton who had succeeded Sir Percy Noble as Commander-in-Chief of the Far Eastern Fleet, was entirely different. Layton was a gruff old seadog who did not hesitate to use abusive language against Britain's potential foe. Layton was a tactless seaman who was conceited enough to believe that the British Navy was strong enough to defeat anybody whereas Brooke-Popham fully realized the significance of the situation in the Far East.

Together with the other local reporters and foreign correspondents in Singapore, the Herald reporter was allowed to attend the Naval Press conferences. Whenever a question was asked by the Herald representative, Layton would invariably reply with a blunt, "I don't need to answer your question. You come from that Japanese Singapore Herald, don't you?" But strangely enough, while the Singapore Herald reporter was not allowed a voice in the press conference, he was never refused permission to attend them. As for questions which the Singapore Herald desired to ask, one of the American newspaper correspondents would always kindly oblige for us.

A share of the responsibility for the fall of Singapore rests, not on the shoulders of Brooke-Popham and Percival, but on the stubborn shoulders of Layton.

Vice-Admiral Geoffrey Layton as Commander-in-Chief of the British Navy in the Far East, was senior to Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in the Far East, since the Navy was considered the senior service to both the Army and the R.A.F. So, on any decision which Brooke-Popham desired to make, Layton had the final voice.

This was one of the reasons for the weakness of Singapore's defense—lack of cooperation between the Navy on one hand and the Army and R.A.F. on the other.

This fact was most glaringly brought out by Admiral Sir Tom Phillips who succeeded Layton as Commander-in-Chief of the British Far Eastern Fleet. For in the loss of the Prince of Wales and the Repulse, it was the over-riding of Brooke-Popham's better judgment that sent the two British warships and Admiral Phillips to destruction at the hands of the Nippon Navy.

It was evident that Brooke-Popham and Layton were at loggerheads long before the outbreak of the Greater East Asia War, both in their temperament and points of view. And now Vice-Admiral Layton commands Ceylon—where again his high-handed manner has already aroused dissension in the island.

Editing the Singapore Herald was at best a hazardous undertaking. Between its mission of serving Nippon's needs, furthering the Axis cause and keeping clear of British censors and officials, the staff had its hands full. Fortunately, it was able to keep going strong until the outbreak of the Greater East Asia War.

It would be wrong to think, however, that the British authorities were not cognizant of the Singapore Herald as a dangerous threat to the security of their Singapore defense. Time and time again, as managing editor, I was called before the censors to explain this article or that caption.



Toward the end of its career, the British Ministry of Information and the two newspapers, Straits Times and Malaya Tribune, were united in a common front against the Singapore Herald. Repeated editorials were written in the columns of these newspapers warning the public against the Singapore Herald. And yet, the Herald circulation continued to soar.

Several months before the outbreak of the current conflict, I paid a friendly call upon Director Peet of the Singapore Department of Information and Director-General R. H. Scott of the British Ministry of Information, both housed in the 12-storeyed Cathay Building.

"Any official objections to the policy of the Singapore Herald?" I asked Director Peet.

"I think not, so long as you do not run afoul of the censors," he replied.

Continuing the discussion with Director-General Scott, formerly friendly to the Singapore Herald before he realized its position, I found him in an angry mood. So I asked him a pointblank question:

"Do you intend to close down the Singapore Herald?"

His reply was equally as frank.

"No, if I closed down your newspaper now, there would be more of a repercussion throughout the world than if I allowed you to continue."

So, thanking him for the information, I went back to the editing of the Singapore Herald with renewed vigor for, by this time, I had realized that war clouds, now gathering in the Far East, were too ominous to be lightly dismissed.

In these days before the outbreak of the Pacific War, the Singapore Herald editorially urged the United States and Great Britain to weigh carefully the issues. Echoing the policies of the Foreign Office in Tokyo, the Singapore Herald firmly declared that Japan desired peace in the Pacific but would fight if the issue was forced.

This point was reiterated from day to day in the editorial columns of the Singapore Herald. The last issue of the Singapore Herald saw a ray of hope in the Washington talks even while there were ominous threats of impending conflict in the air.

The British Custodian of Enemy Property padlocked the doors of the Singapore Herald on December 8, 1941, scarcely two hours after Japan's declaration of war against the United States and Great Britain.

Thus was brought to a close the colorful, interesting career of the Singapore Herald which had fought British vested interests for almost two years and eight months and paved the way for the dawn of a new day in Malai under the aegis of the Nippon Forces.



### CHAPTER III

## PROPAGANDA AND THE PUBLIC

British propaganda efforts before the outbreak of the War of Greater East Asia provided an interesting study. As the Pacific situation deteriorated, the Ministry of Information and the Department of Information joined in efforts to belittle the strength of the Japanese. They insisted that Japan was not strong enough to fight both Britain and the United States and that the so-called A.B.C.D. encirclement would keep the Japanese out of the war.

Such Far Eastern experts as Sir George Sansom, who headed the Far Eastern Bureau of the British Ministry of Economic Warfare stationed in Singapore, repeatedly warned the British officials that Japan was fully prepared to fight but all his sincere efforts went unheeded.

As Japan's intentions became more apparent, the British officials futilely tried to enlist the support of the Asiatic masses—but here they received cold reception. Furthermore, they tried to combine propaganda in English for both British and Asiatics which was a grave error.

The British Ministry of Information employed one of the largest staffs in Singapore for their propaganda work which included loudspeakers throughout the city, travelling vans and posters—but to no avail. In conjunction with the work of the British Ministry of Information, the British Broadcasting Corporation finally decided to build a strong station in Singapore—they sent experts and technicians, but too late. The 100-kilowatt station at Pasir Panjang was incomplete because the war in Europe had disrupted transportation facilities. Such men as Eric Bell of the B.B.C.

endeavored to put the British Malayan Broadcasting Corporation on a sound basis—they failed because they did not understand local psychology.

Then, the appeal to the Chinese population was made in the guise of "Aid for Britain is aid for Chungking." Posters of Winston Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek were put up throughout strategic centers but overseas Chinese apathy to Chungking was just as great as their indifference to Britain.

In the Army, the Scot, Aussie and Cockney did not understand the Pacific situation. Their enemy, they had been told, was Germany. Now they were informed that the enemy was Japan. British Army officials tried to conceal the fact that blundering politics had brought Britain on the verge of a war in the Far East. Most of the troops knew that Britain was fighting for her very life in Europe and in Libya and they wondered why war was looming in the Pacific.

Lectures on Japan, classes in the Japanese language were given to the officers—but all of them were started too late to be of value. In bayonet practice, Japanese names were affixed to the dummies, so that the soldiers might develop some hatred of the Japanese.

Pamphlets and circulars were passed around the soldiers depicting the physical differences between the Japanese and the Chinese—so that they could be on guard for parachutists but the soldiers simply laughed at the idea.

British propaganda backfired in Singapore. The officials had so imbued the local population with false confidence that when they tried to muster an adequate civilian defense, all their efforts were ignored.

Even after December 8, the British propaganda efforts were clumsy and crude. When the first Japanese bombers raided Singapore, they informed the public that they were German Messerschmidts piloted by German pilots—even



using German bombs. Later, they admitted that the planes were Japanese, only the pilots were German. Still later, they conceded that both the planes and pilots were Japanese but German-trained and inspired.

Such propaganda efforts simply made the British officials look ridiculous. The apparent confusion of the British only evoked amusement—for by this time the Asiatics had resolved that if war came to Malaya, they would let the British fight by themselves. They would simply look on. After all, there was no need for the Asiatics to defend Singapore for the British Imperialists, they reasoned.

In order to understand the situation in Singapore before the war fully, it is necessary to study the psychology of the local population, and the various conflicting elements in the social pattern. During my pre-war years in Singapore I made it a rule to meet as many types of people as possible and to join them in all manner of activities—it served to the advantage of the Singapore Herald and was stimulating as well.

In addition to my social contacts with British officials, American businessmen and visiting journalists who usually foregathered at the Raffles Hotel lounge, the Adelphi or the Coconut Grove, I developed contacts with several younger British officials who might be of use. Going around with these individuals gave me entry to many groups which otherwise would have been inaccessible. Later, I phoned them at will for confirmation of much vital information.

After 5 p.m. on any weekday evening, the Raffles Hotel lounge was the center for that "short" drink before dinner which often lasted into the night. Here I was in constant touch with such men as Victor Keen of the New York Herald Tribune who spent some four months in pre-war Singapore, Harrison Forman, N.B.C. commentator, and Clive Turnbull, able roving correspondent of the Australian Associated Press. Often I gave them new tips which formed the basis

of their dispatches to their respective newspapers. And it was not infrequent that I made suggestions which were incorporated into their interpretations of the Singapore scene.

In this way, I worked on the psychology of the average working journalist who wanted information but did not know how to go about getting it in a strange city. The average British journalist in Singapore was slow and inept, and naturally they turned to me as a news source. They fully realized that many of my tips were pro-Japanese in nature and others most critical of British administration, but considered them newsworthy enough for inclusion in their dispatches. Oftentimes, they would quote the editorials of the Singapore Herald and in turn, they often allowed me to reprint their dispatches in the Singapore Herald. In this way, I was able to publish criticism of British inefficiency but under the name of well-known foreign correspondents. Having once passed the dispatches, the censors could not very well rescind the ruling.

The Singapore Herald utilized to the fullest the services of Englishmen who, at one time or other, were on the staff. Their principal value to the newspaper was in getting contacts at the exclusive European clubs to which the Asiatics were not admitted. The first one, Frank Love, started with the Singapore Herald at its inception and continued until I took charge as managing editor. The other was Stanley Jones, a British journalist of 20 years' standing in the Singapore Colony. He had been assistant editor of the Malaya Tribune and the Straits Times. A brilliant journalist, Jones' one failing was drink, a shortcoming which had caused termination of his services at the other newspapers. I took full cognizance of his weakness and utilized his caustic writing—for in his sober moments, Stanley Jones was easily the outstanding editorial writer in Singapore. In addition, his long standing and residence in Singapore



brought many useful contacts.

Among those whom I best knew in Singapore were Pat Cauvin, a Rhodesian-born Britisher, who was deputy immigration official, and David Peck, assistant Posts and Telegraphs engineer. Cauvin and Peck lived on top of the Fullerton Building which housed the main post-office, the Singapore Club and various official departments. The pent-house in which they lived was one of the spacious quarters provided for Government employees.

Pat Cauvin, incidentally was the immigration officer who had greeted me by name upon my arrival in Singapore and later transferred to Padang Besar on the Thai-Malayan frontier. He was most interested in things Japanese.

David Peck was a quiet, easy-going type of official. He did not warm up to me as did Frank Love and Pat Cauvin. We shared a weekend bungalow at Kampong Loyang, just off Changi Point, on the Strait of Johore, facing Pulau Ubin where the Japanese made a decoy move in the landing operations during the siege of Singapore.

To this weekend bungalow, we would often invite others and engage them in interesting discussions of British life in Singapore and frank criticism of conditions, free from the incumbrances of official eavesdropping. Some of the discussions proved extremely informative.

During the Christmas of 1940, in company with these young British officials, I made a trip north to Kuala Lumpur, Malacca and Seremban, spending several days at Port Dickson and here again the presence of these Britishers gave me worthwhile contacts.

In addition to these British officials, I made the acquaintance of several British officers attached to the Loyal Regiment stationed at Alexandria barracks. All these Loyal Regiment officers had been commissioned from the British Territorials after the outbreak of the European War.

One spoke of the Dunkirk debacle, another had gone

through the horrible German raids on London in the winter of 1940 while the third had spent some time previously with the Indian Army on the Northwest Frontier. In an atmosphere of sharp intelligence, we would often discuss vital topics of the day. They afforded a good insight into the psychology of the British Army stationed in Singapore.

Another was an Australian lawyer who had studied law at Oxford as a Rhode Scholar and now was flight lieutenant in the R.A.F. at Seletar. He was married to a newspaper-woman on the staff of the Malaya Tribune and he often added his point of view to our interesting discussions. On all occasions, we made it clear that no military topics would be discussed for our mutual security but nevertheless it was apparent from the tone of their conversations that there was a good deal of discontent within the British Army ranks.

From these conversations I learned of the peculiar social structure within the British Army, which was later admitted as a weakness, wherein officers and non-commissioned men could not go about together. The sacred precincts of such social centers of the Tanglin Club, S.C.C. and S.R.C. were barred to the ranks. Nor were non-commissioned men able to accompany officers to the movies. Thus, as was once the case, two brothers could not go to the same theater together, nor even have dinner together.

There was the instance of a Harrow "Old Boy" who had graduated from Oxford—but since he had chosen to fight in the ranks rather than accept a commission, he could not dine at Raffles with his social equals while an uncouth farmer from Queensland was able to, merely because of his stripes.

With the arrival of the Australian troops, the friction in the Singapore garrison increased. The Highlanders had no use for the Loyals and the Manchesters—and the Highlanders numbered the crack Argyll and Sutherlands, Gordons and the Seaforths who had been withdrawn from



Shanghai. Later, the East Surreys came to Singapore, and so, at the outbreak of war, the permanent garrison consisted of three English regiments and three Scottish regiments. The remainder of the British troops were called the Emu—Emergency Military Units—which was largely composed of untried troops under the leadership of Territorial officers—so the enlisted men had nothing but contempt for their officers.

In the numerous cafes and bars along Jalan Besar and Lavender Street, the Scots and the English and later the Australians got into so many brawls that it was necessary to give leave to different regiments on different days. The Australians were resented alike by the Scots and the English because the "boys from down under" received higher wages. Better accommodations were provided and Australian residents in Singapore established the Anzac Club for the Aussies and New Zealand troops.

That is why in the course of the subsequent fighting, different sectors were assigned to the Australians, Scots and English troops while the Indians were forced to take up the dangerous Jitler line which bore the brunt of the initial attack.

One officer jokingly told me:

"Unless there is a war damn quick, it might be necessary to stage field maneuvers in Malaya somewhere and let the Scots and the Australians go at it with real ammunition."

This indicated how serious was the rift between the various troops.

The Australian troops resented the social ostracism of British troops and therefore kept much to themselves. There was a close comradeship between the Australians in Singapore, particularly the race-track element, for jockeys and trainers were all Australians, and the Australian troops. At the cabarets and at other social functions, the Australians kept to themselves.

Another point of discontent was the inadequate enter-

tainment facilities for the troops, both British and Australians. Just as the Yankees in Chungking now complain that they miss their "beer, ice-cream sodas and women," so these British troops, both officers and men, complained of the attitude of the British.

"They tell us that there will be no war and still they do not allow us to have our womenfolk join us," was their peevishly put complaint. "And, to make matters worse, they do not allow us adequate relaxation," they added.

The attitude of the British plutocrats toward the troops was particularly bad. The British civilians merely tolerated the presence of troops in Singapore. And this condescending attitude greatly antagonized the soldiers. In the old days before the British grew so excited over the menace of war, the garrison troops had been usually professional soldiers but since Dunkirk most of the officers were men in high social and political standing—much superior to the ex-London policeman and scrubwoman that made up the Singapore society.

"We have come out to Singapore to fight because England is in danger, not to fight for the British Empire so that these social and economic outcasts can wallow in luxury," one officer told me. These words portrayed the typical attitude of the intelligent British officer.

The Australian and British officers did not want to fight Japan. There is no reason why an understanding could not be reached, they often declared. That was why the Singapore Herald was widely read by these individuals. The Straits Times reflects not British opinion, they bluntly declared, but the money-mad imperialists who have brought about the present world war.

Cyrano's Restaurant on Orchard Road was the center of such bitter talk that it was ruled out of bounds for British and Australian troops. Likewise, British officers were discouraged from going out to Coconut Grove out at Pasir



Panjang because it was the center of the American social life.

These officers were told to stay at the Cricket Club, Tanglin Club and the Swimming Club where the interests of British industrialists and capitalists could be fully expounded to them.

"Narrow-minded British colonials," the officials often told me. "It's good to be able to talk and think sanely—like we can here in your home."

Meanwhile, the British officials were having difficulty with the Chinese population. In the early days of the China Affair, a number of Communists were brought into the country to organize anti-Japanese demonstrations, but later, many of them had turned against the British when the Russo-German alliance was signed.

Once in, these Chinese Communists caused no end of trouble. It was necessary for the British to bring in Chinese secret agents from Hongkong and Chungking to handle Chinese opinion. A number of these British-educated Chinese were given large funds to keep the Chinese in line but it was useless.

When I first came to Singapore several Chinese who worked in the Singapore Herald's composing shop had been assaulted while Japanese stores in Middle Road had been stoned by unruly Chinese terrorists. However, in the early days of the European War these same Chinese turned against the British and the British, ironically enough were unable to cope with the opposition of their own making. For the Overseas Chinese who compose the bulk of the Chinese population in Malaya were not interested in European politics nor in Chungking machinations—they merely wanted to carry on their business undisturbed. If anything at heart they sided with Japan in the Pacific issue because they longed to right the injustices and persecution suffered at the hands of the British colonials.

Many of the Chinese were forced to make contributions to Chungking but always in the form of Charity Cabarets and Entertainments—never directly because the Chinese were not that interested in Chungking. Later, the British came out with the slogan, "Help for Britain Is Help for Chungking" but this campaign also fell flat because the Chinese had even less interest in Britain.

Typical of the Chinese attitude was the opinion expressed by Dato S. Q. Wong during a discussion in the Singapore Municipal Council on the purchase of cement. It appeared that the bid made by a Japanese had been the lowest.

Dato Wong declared that the Municipal Councillors were businessmen, not politicians; if Japanese cement was the lowest bid, as businessmen they should buy Japanese cement and not British cement. But the British majority overruled him—as was usually the case in Municipal Council meetings, for there was only a handful of Asiatic representatives against the overwhelming number of British officials and non-officials.

There were a few Chinese with definite pro-British leanings who had gone to English schools and learned to ape insidious Anglo-American customs. Others were Chungking agents who attempted to foster a "support Chungking" movement but which was not very successful for the apathy of the Asiatic population countered all such efforts.

The Arab and Jewish population, while Asiatic, were pro-British. They supported British war funds, etc., because they made money from business transactions with the British and were large landowners and feared to jeopardize their positions.

Such people as the Jewish Elias and David and Arab Alkaff, as well as Ed Alsakoff continuously aped the British manners and customs, because they did not know any better. They gave large parties and invited British officials and military officers because they believed that by doing



so they were enhancing their own positions.

The Indian population, divided into the laboring class and the merchants, stood apart from the social and political storm around them. However, some of the Indian newspapermen and political agitators who had been deported from India felt keenly the ignominy of being deported from one's own native country.

There were a number of intelligent Indian lawyers, doctors, teachers and newspapermen. A number of the Indians were ardent Christian clergymen and workers. Since most of the laboring class came from South India and the businessmen from Bombay, there were differences of languages and customs, as much as between the Cantonese and Hokkiens and those from North China.

The indigenous Malays had not reached social and political maturity. In fact, the bulk of the Malai population in Singapore came from various parts of Indonesia. Many came from Sumatra and were only given the opportunity to hold down menial jobs as motorcar drivers, officeboys and gardeners.

A few of the Malays were of better class; connected chiefly with the ruling families in Malai. But as in usual Indonesian countries, there was a tremendous gap between the lower classes and the ruling class—a middle class simply did not exist in the Malai community.

So with these few exceptions the bulk of the population remained indifferent to the rising tide of war. The Chinese residents had been in Malaya for many generations, many of them had had humble forefathers.

It is said that many self-made men in Western countries have had their start as newsboys—selling newspapers on street corners of London and New York. In Singapore, many of the Chinese financial "towkays" had at one time been laborers. By toil and sweat, honest or otherwise, they rose to economic autocracy and social affluence. The

Aw brothers, Aw Boon Haw and Aw Boon Par, are an example.

The average Chinese in Malaya, went through the local schools, passed what was known as senior Cambridge or high-school examinations and went into business. A few attained scholastic excellence as Queen's scholars and studied in England. Others, scions of the wealthy, also traveled to Europe and to America for higher studies. But on the whole, higher education for the Chinese consisted of attendance at Hongkong University or else St. John's in Shanghai.

In business, these Singapore compradores were indispensable. In the large European import and export firms, as chief clerks, store-keepers and accountants, the Malai-born Chinese were efficient and conscientious.

There was a good proportion of foreign-educated Chinese lawyers, doctors and dentists. Others operated shops, cinemas, restaurants and amusement halls. As in up-country Malaya, it was the English-speaking young Chinese with but a smattering of native Cantonese or Fukien dialects who were the progressive, ambitious young businessmen.

Usually, they occupied the weekdays with business, evenings at the cabarets and weekends at one of the many Chinese clubs throughout the city. For sports, there was the Straits Chinese Recreation Club, the Chinese Swimming Club, and others. They were enthusiastic sportsmen and fielded strong hockey, football and cricket teams. The local Chinese were also enthusiastic patrons of the Singapore Racecourse, played mahjongg and danced at the cabarets. Theirs was a simple, well-rounded life, typical of the overseas Chinese.

There was the usual round of gossip, of unsavory affairs with cabaret girls, but eventually they settled down to married life with wives either chosen by their parents or a girl



of their own tastes. They read English-language books and magazines, dressed in the latest American fashions, not because they admired the Anglo-Americans but because this was what they had been taught to do at English schools.

But at home, these Chinese were orthodox Chinese. I have been invited to many homes by young English-speaking friends and have found that in each case the home was strictly disciplined by parents who adhered to Chinese traditions and mode of living. Food usually consisted of Cantonese, Hylam (Hainan) or Hokkien (Fukien) cooking—although in many homes these Chinese dishes were supplemented by Malai curries and spices.

Roughly speaking, the Chinese population in Singapore consisted of the Cantonese laboring class, the servants and amahs; Hylam houseboys and waiters, Cantonese and Hylam coffee-shop and stall owners; Hokkien businessmen and professional men (doctors, lawyers and dentists) who came down from Shanghai and Hongkong. One might even include in the group from Shanghai, the cabaret girls who had migrated south in search of fortunes—many marrying and settling down in Singapore.

In sharp contrast to the Chinese, there was the Eurasian population. Now Eurasians throughout the world are commonly accepted as those of mixed European and Asiatic blood. In India, they are known as Anglo-Indians and in Ceylon as Dutch Burghers. They grew out of the mating of Portuguese, Dutch and British with various native races. In Singapore, the largest part of the Eurasian population was of Portuguese and Dutch descent while there was only a sprinkling of Chinese Eurasians—for somehow the Chinese did not mix with the Europeans, save in such large population centers as Hongkong and Shanghai.

Such being the case, these Eurasians of Portuguese and Dutch blood included a wide range. It is erroneous to consider them alike in temperament, mode of living and

in language. In the upper strata were the lawyers, doctors and businessmen who were almost like the Europeans in appearance, speech and mode of living, save for ostracism of blood. Then at the other end of the scale were the third and fourth generation Eurasians who had almost become Malais—spoke nothing but Malai and lived in the outskirts of the Malai kampongs. Many of them became police constables and firemen. Even among them, only a few had pale complexions while usually they were swarthy and dark. There were a few Anglo-Indians in Singapore who preferred to be associated with the Indian community rather than with the Eurasian group.

In the middle was the Eurasian clerical class who, like their Malai-born Chinese colleagues, worked in European shops, import houses and factories. They would ape, as far as their financial standing would allow, the European life. The girls, if fair complexioned looked forward to marriage with a European, be he a drunken British beach-comber or ordinary British Army private.

A number of comely Eurasians became cabaret dancers, waitresses and shop-girls. Their one undying ambition was to marry a European but they usually ended up by marrying one of their own kind. Many of them affected Dorothy Lamour hair-dress and slightly bizarre make-up, but on the whole the Eurasian girls were pretty, healthy and comely.

The Eurasians did not get along too well with the Chinese because the Chinese had their own racial pride while a great many of the Eurasians considered themselves better than the Chinese because of that drop of white blood. While there was no outward rift there was a good deal of petty racial squabbles.

The British considered the Eurasian as below social considerations—even below the Chinese, Indians and Arabs which antagonized the Eurasians no end. The difficulty



with the Eurasians was that their community lacked social, financial leaders whom the British alone acknowledged among the Chinese, Indians and Arabs.

The Eurasians had their own Singapore Recreation Club on the opposite side of the Municipal Padang from the Singapore Cricket Club, fielded excellent hockey, cricket and football teams. Many were mechanically inclined and found suitable employment at the Singapore Airport and Seletar Naval Base.

In the days just before the outbreak of the Pacific War, when the British were unable to fill the ranks of the Volunteers and mechanical crew for the R.A.F., it was the Eurasians who responded. They believed that in the British ranks, they would get better treatment than that accorded in civilian life.

The girls found that many low-class British privates would take them out to dinner, the cinemas and the cabarets. Most of the Portuguese Eurasians were conscientious Catholics and stern parental obstacles forbade the Eurasian girls from making any illicit liaisons with the British soldiers.

When war clouds became more threatening over the Malaya skies, the British officials pleaded for the Asiatic population to cooperate with them. But the Chinese, Indians and Eurasians remained indifferent. Even promises of equality in the ranks failed to stir the apathy of the Asiatics who had long remembered the long British oppression and discrimination.

Only in the Ambulance Air-raid Precautions and Auxiliary Medical Corps were there any noticeable results, because the intelligent Eurasians and Chinese were loathe to bear arms against Japan. The British promised additional gasoline allowances and promises of extra food rations to those who joined one of the various services. I think, on the whole, it was the thought of their helpless

countrymen during raids that prompted the Chinese, Indians and Eurasians to cooperate reluctantly with the British officials.

Despite all the precautionary measures, R.A.F. drills, etc., it was an ill-prepared Singapore that found itself embroiled in war.

On that historic December 8, the air-raid siren sounded only after the roar of Japanese bombers had faded into the distance. Street lights were on full while every house was unshaded. Precautions went unheeded and the populace crowded into the streets at the first sound of bombers.

Air-raid shelters were only for the rich. The Government refused to erect public shelters and so only the Europeans and rich Chinese and Indians had the protection of private shelters. It is decreed that at the first sign of raids the public should evacuate the congested areas of Chinatown—but the crude attap huts in open fields hardly offered adequate shelter and many preferred to remain in the city or else take up residence in the out-lying districts.

Thus, the blame for the appalling social and passive chaos in Singapore during the siege must be placed squarely on the shoulders of the British officials. Coupled with the attitude of British troops who were resentful of British officialdom and the Asiatic population who remained indifferent, the defense of Singapore was futile and the results a foregone conclusion.

Singapore on the eve of the Greater East Asia War was wide-open, for the British authorities tried to maintain the morale of its populace with an air of false security. The Raffles, Cathay Restaurant, Cyranos, Coconut Grove and the various British clubs were open until midnight and some even later. There were frenzied parties and gallons of copious drinks. No effort was spared to present a picture of gaiety and confidence—but underneath lurked the grim spectre of war for the frantic officialdom, wholly



lacking in confidence.

The Chinese, Eurasians and Malays were supposed to fall for all this gaiety but most of them were not beguiled. They spent money, entertained, not because they had confidence in Singapore's defense but because they feared that money would eventually be useless—hence their rush to spend their money. Some of the more prudent ones, despite official prohibition, stocked up on foodstuffs and hoarding was in full swing when the war broke out.

Singapore danced until the very fall of Singapore, one of the eyewitnesses of the siege later revealed. Even, when most of the Malayan Peninsula had been occupied by the Japanese forces, the Raffles Hotel floor was in full swing. Literally, Singapore danced away its very security.

Alfred Duff Cooper and his wife, Lady Diana, had been sent out by London to investigate the situation in Singapore but local officials were loathe to allow any investigation by London which would only bare their incompetence. So they entertained the Duff Coopers until it was too late to take any action.

The Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, did not even go out to meet Duff Cooper on his arrival from London. And it was the duty of Duff Cooper to make that startling admission over the radio that the Prince of Wales and Repulse had been sunk because of differences of authority between Sir Robert Brooke-Popham and Admiral Sir Tom Phillips.

And when Prime Minister Winston Churchill refused to have a public inquiry on the fall of Singapore, he was well aware that public revelation of the true facts behind its fall would result in a great shock to the anti-Axis camp. True, the real reason behind the fall of Singapore were equally as powerful as the reasons for the collapse of France.

## CHAPTER IV WAR CLOUDS GATHER

Ominous signs of war filled the Pacific horizon. Mr. Saburo Kurusu had flown on his special mission to Washington in an effort to present Japan's last offer of conciliation. But in Singapore Sir Robert Brooke-Popham rushed over to Manila to confer with Admiral Thomas C. Hart, Chief of the United States Asiatic Fleet, General Douglas MacArthur, Commander-in-Chief of the Philippines Army and Francis B. Sayre, U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippines. This was the Anglo-American answer to Japan's gesture of peace.

Singapore was in the headlines of the world. Pan-American Airways, ambitious American airline, stretched out from Manila, extending their transpacific service to the southernmost tip of Asia.

Shortly after Pan-American Airways had established a branch office in Singapore, Manager Owen Johnson was faced with a problem. The New York office had ordered a photograph of the Singapore Airport which was to be displayed at the Broadway office in New York for publicity purposes.

However, British officials refused to allow Pan-American Airways to photograph the Airport since it was one of the fortified zones. No matter how Manager Johnson argued, the British authorities were adamant.

That night Johnson was in the Raffles Hotel lounge looking unhappy. Asked what was the matter, the Pan-American official related his predicament.

"That's easy," one of the crowd spoke up.

"Go around the corner of the Hotel to Nakajima's photo



shop—they have pictures of the Singapore Airport on display.”

The Pan-American manager rushed over to Nakajima's and sure enough he found all the pictures of the Singapore Airport that he needed. It seemed that Nakajima, Japanese photographer and one of the best in Singapore, was official photographer for the airport.

For a long time, Singapore had been a Mecca for American journalists, magazine writers and political experts. Some had stayed for one or two weeks but the prize fool of them all was John Gunther who stayed overnight in Singapore and wrote a chapter in his book "Inside Asia." In Singapore, his volume was held in ridicule because of its inaccuracies. Gunther attempted to capitalise on his successful "Inside Europe" but the overnight stop in Singapore, drunk, so the story goes, did not do his reputation any good.

As war clouds gathered, the pilgrimage to Singapore began. Frank Gervasi, Italian-American writer for Collier's magazine who had been kicked out of Italy because of a derogatory article concerning Mussolini, was not very popular in Singapore. Even the British authorities did not trust him because of his Italian name, which was particularly amusing because he was a rabid anti-Fascist.

Victor Keen of the New York Herald-Tribune came down from Shanghai but left in disgust because the whisky in Singapore was bad and the war did not start on schedule. Leland Stowe, white-haired war correspondent for the New York Evening Post, stayed long enough to have a sukiyaki dinner with us. Dennis McAvoy, who had lived many years in Tokyo, came as a correspondent for the Chicago Times.

Martha Gellhorn, wife of Ernest Hemmingway, had a special assignment from Collier's magazine. Relman Morin, former Associated Press chief in Tokyo, A. T. Steele of the Chicago Daily News, John Morris of United Press and many others passed through.

Among the articles by American writers which startled staid Singapore officialdom were the ones by the Carl Mydans, Shelley Smith team of Time and Life magazines and the one by Martha Gellhorn of Collier's Magazine.

Said the Life Magazine's special Singapore issue on July 21, 1941:

"If Singapore falls, the Philippines, the Netherlands Indies, Australia, India, China and Africa fall too."

However, the statement in Life that "Chinese trade, whites govern, natives labor" was the crux of the prewar Singapore problem.

"White men built Singapore but it is the Chinese who really make a living out of it. Some 2,000,000 Chinese are the shopkeepers, small businessmen and rubber strippers of Singapore, and the tin-mine workers of the hinterland.

"The Chinese started coming in 1930 from South China to work the tin mines of Malaya. Many have gone home with their fortunes and many still think they will go home someday. They do not, however, contribute at all to Britain's war effort. They feel scant loyalty to Singapore and Malaya."

Martha Gellhorn bitterly criticized Singapore Europeans' Hollywoodish luxury. She pointed out that the British officers looked beautiful in their trim uniforms.

"But when the mud of the swamps and jungles splatters their pretty uniforms, will they still look as beautiful?"

This created a furore in Singapore military circles when Collier's Magazine appeared in Malaya.

The photographing of pill-boxes which cluttered up Singapore's streets was officially prohibited. But Harrison Forman, N.B.C. commentator and special writer for the New York Times, sent the pictures to the Times which calmly printed the pictures of the pill-boxes, much to the consternation of British officialdom.

I had lunch with Cecil Brown, Columbia Broadcasting Company commentator, just a week before the outbreak of



war. He was bitterly resentful of the manner in which British censors had deleted his broadcasts.

Later, I learned that he had been "kicked out" of Singapore and completed his broadcasts from Batavia. He and Martin Agronsky, N.B.C. representative who flew to Singapore from the Middle East after the outbreak of war, were in the "bad books" of the Singapore censors throughout.

On his return to the United States, Brown wrote a scathing article condemning the attitude of British officials in Singapore before and during the war. He went so far as to say that the fall of Singapore served them right.

Radio correspondents covered Singapore also—Harrison Forman of National Broadcasting Corporation and Cecil Brown of Columbia Broadcasting System. Forman thought war would start in Manchoukuo and started north two weeks before the outbreak of war while Brown stayed on in Singapore, waiting and hoping.

On the eve of the war, there were only Harold Guard, United Press manager at Singapore Darrel G. Berrigan, his assistant, Yates McDaniel of Associated Press, Tillman Durdin of the New York Times, Kenneth Selby-Walker of Reuters and Moseley and Gallagher, two correspondents for London newspapers. There was also a representative of the Australian Associated Press.

Moseley, cousin of British Fascist Sir Oswald Moseley, was the author of several books. And since he had spent some time in the United States, particularly Hollywood, he and I had some interesting conversations.

The Sunday just before the outbreak of war, Moseley invited me to have lunch with him in his apartment atop the Cathay Building. He had just come out from the Middle East where he had covered the Libyan campaign for the London Daily Mail. He told me that he had wired his head-office to be transferred back to the Egyptian front. They told him to stay on in Singapore but he was so determined that

finally after three cablegrams, London gave him permission to return to Libya.

"I don't think that there will be a war in the Pacific—at least not for another six months," was his calm statement. I wished him a pleasant journey. He, no doubt had invited me to lunch in order to find out if I knew that action was impending.

Japanese correspondents in Singapore just before the war were Jun Ninomiya of the Asahi Shimbun, Takashi Kaite of Domei Tsushin-sha and Katsutaro Suganuma of the Mainichi-Nichi Nichi newspapers.

Since the reciprocal freezing of assets by Japan and Britain and the United States in June, Singapore, wholly dependent on trade, had become a deserted port. In addition, the British authorities effected an order that news cables could be sent only in English and consequently I placed myself at the disposal of the three Japanese correspondents. I tried to serve as a liaison man between them, the foreign correspondents and the British authorities.

In addition to my work at the Herald, I had taken over the editing of the English news bulletins issued by the Eastern News Service. In order to keep in touch with Japan's official policies, I regularly visited the Japanese Consul-General, Ken Tsurumi, whose long experience with newspapermen in Shanghai as Embassy Press Attache benefited both the editorial policies of the Herald and the Eastern News Service.

From time to time, interesting news and information were passed on to the Japanese correspondents and the Japanese Consul-General since nearly every evening found me at Raffles or Adelphi with one or another of the visiting American correspondents.

Since the very first, I had kept in touch with the British Ministry of Information, Singapore's Department of Information and the new Services Publicity Office. The last named



was formed with the arrival of the first Australian troops to Singapore. The office whose function it was to keep foreign newspapermen informed, was in charge of Lieutenant-Commander John Proud, an Australian with a Reserve Commission in the British Navy. An ex-newspaperman, Proud was most helpful.

Perhaps the following incident will give an example of his attitude toward the Japanese Press.

After landing at Singapore, the Australians, for the most part, were sent north to the Kuala Lumpur, Seremban and Malacca areas. The Services Publicity Office arranged for a trip north for the foreign and local Press. Somehow, the Japanese newspapermen were not invited. Upon inquiries, I learned that Vice-Admiral Layton, chief of the Publicity Bureau, had issued orders that only British and American newspapermen were to be allowed to make the tour—which disqualified local Chinese, Indian and Eurasian correspondents and, of course, the Japanese.

Commander Proud, after informing me of the official orders, added:

"If you happened to be drinking a glass of beer at the Malacca Rest House (Hotel) on Sunday, you might meet some of the American newspapermen. I don't think Layton would have any objections to that." I caught the hint and due arrangements were made. Two days later on Sunday, I was at the Malacca Rest House having a glass of beer. Sure enough I met Proud and his party of foreign newspapermen.

"We are just going to the General Headquarters of the A.I.F. Want to come along?"

With that, I joined the party which then went on a tour of inspection of Australian camps near Malacca. Ending at the Malacca High School where the divisional headquarters were located, an Australian artillery officer gave a brief talk on the defense and strength of the British forces now that

the Australians were in Malaya.

The Press conference ended rather abruptly when the Australian officer noticed me in the crowd. It seemed that the Straits Times Representative had called his attention to my nationality.

That evening all of the correspondents went out into the town to see the Australians drinking at the bars, invading private homes and desecrating Chinese temples. At a cabaret, over glasses of beer, an Australian sergeant boasted how he had chased three pretty Chinese girls through the streets of Malacca.

"When I grabbed them, they sure screamed," he laughingly remarked.

At one of the Chinese temples, Australians went up to the altar and walked off with the incense burner.

These were but a few of the incidents which caused Chinese to become bitter against the Australians.

One of the American correspondents asked them.

"Do you like Malaya?"

The Digger answered back:

"Of course not. They didn't tell us where we were going when the transport sailed from Sydney. We thought we were going to Libya and instead they make us sweat here in the jungle building roads and fortifications.

That summed up the general attitude of the Australian soldier. When he complained too much, the pay was increased and that angered the British and Scottish troops.

Even in the highest circles, this antagonism between the British and Australians existed.

One night in Raffles Hotel, I was present when Major-General L. V. Bond, Lieutenant-General Percival's predecessor as General Officer Commanding the British Forces in Malaya, invited Major-General Gordon Bennett, Commander-in-Chief of the Australian forces in Malaya, to dinner. Bond was dressed, as was the custom, in military dress uniform. Gor-



don Bennett arrived in field uniform.

When Bond called attention to the fact that all the guests were dressed in formal uniforms, Gordon Bennett replied:

"When Australian soldiers leave home to fight a war, they don't have time to pack a dress uniform like the British soldiers."

This was the beginning of the British-Australian animosity which permeated throughout the ranks and which finally resulted in Gordon Bennett leaving Percival while the siege of Singapore was at its height.

And the British and Australians were not the only ones that disagreed in Singapore. As war clouds became more threatening, the Americans moved right into Singapore. From Manila, they sent liaison officers to "co-operate" with the British but in reality these American Army and Navy officers were agents to keep a watch on the British.

As one American officer told me;

"I wouldn't trust an Englishman as far as you could throw the Empire State Building."

And all of these U.S. Army and Navy men brought their uniforms—just in case. These Americans stayed at Raffles, drank freely of British hospitality but kept a good watch on what the British were doing—and not doing—with regards to defense.

"If war ever comes to Singapore, we Americans are not going to fight to save the British Empire." This was the remark made by a Chief Petty Officer in the U.S. Navy.

Along about June, the United States sent about 100 Curtiss P-40 planes to Chungking via Rangoon. And shortly afterwards, ground crew and pilots for the Lend-Lease aircraft, began to stream through Singapore.

All this was officially a secret. And yet about 30 of these reckless American soldiers of fortune ripped Singapore wide-open for ten days. On most of these escapades, Darrell Berrigan of the United Press and Harrison Forman of the

National Broadcasting Corporation acted as guides.

The American Volunteer Group was asked to be careful of spies. Speaking of spies, it was just about this time that the Singapore police trailed me for about a week.

Every morning when I went to the office, a taxi followed me and parked right alongside my motor-car. And throughout the day wherever I happened to go, the same taxi followed until I returned home at midnight. My Malai driver told me that it was a Chinese detective from the Special Branch. My driver even ate his meals with the driver of the taxi.

But it annoyed me no end and finally, one evening, I took the wheel of the motor-car and gave the taxi a dizzy chase through the streets of Singapore's Chinatown.. After 40 minutes of fast driving, I finally lost the detective who never followed me again.

On speaking of this experience with others, I found that many prominent Japanese had been similarly trailed by Special Branch detectives.

British authorities were spy-crazy and while they suspected many Japanese, no one was apprehended in the last few years of Singapore's existence.

The real spies in the truest sense were these American military agents for they ferreted out the deplorable weakness of Singapore's defenses. When American newspapermen tried to cable the truth to the United States, the censors red-penciled all their cables, which was very foolish because the Americans merely took these cables to Manila and filed their cables there.

The stupidity of British censors was a standing joke with the American correspondents. The Americans all used to file their cables late at night after 11:30 because they found out that the British censor went home at mid-night and in the last half-hour rarely read the cables because he was so anxious to get home to his young wife.

Thus as American newspapermen continued to scheme



and outwit the puzzled Press censors in Singapore, British authorities grew more angry. It was an open secret among the American, Australian and other foreign newspaper correspondents that the censors were incompetent.

Harrison Forman, the National Broadcasting Corporation broadcaster, was made to submit his broadcasts 36 hours in advance—which sometimes “killed” his news before he could get on the air. So, he usually filled his broadcasts with lots of inconsequential descriptions.

“The British have the greatest propaganda weapon in the American Press and Radio—and simply because they are afraid that the correspondents will tell the truth, they block us in every possible way.”

These were Forman's own words just before he left for Hongkong disgusted with the British censors.

New York Times' Hallet Abend had a bitter quarrel with the Press censors in Singapore. Abend was so angry about the treatment which he received in Singapore that he wrote a special chapter about it in his latest book on the Far East—but the chapter was crudely cut out by the censors when the book was put on sale at the Kelly & Walsh bookstore.

In an interview which appeared in the Singapore Herald, Abend declared;

“In all my years in Japan and China, I must admit that Japanese censorship, while strict, was fair whereas British censorship here in Singapore is simply impossible.”

Hallett Abend came back to the Far East twice afterwards but he refused to go to Singapore. He usually wrote from Manila which many other American newspapermen made their base for news of the Far East.

The story of United Press in Singapore was that of one continuous battle with the British authorities. Some time before, Roy Howard of the Scripps-Howard newspapers had come to Singapore and had decided that United Press must extend its service in this vital section of Asia. John

Morris came down from Shanghai to negotiate but the British authorities refused to allow the United Press to come in.

Finally, angry protests were made in Washington and London by Roy Howard through his influential political friends and the United Press was permitted to come into Singapore on certain conditions. One of the conditions was that the messages from Manila must be relayed through the British Government wireless station—which meant that the news was delayed long enough for Reuters to break the news first. More than once the United Press had news which the censors would not pass because Reuters had not “confirmed” it.

Harold Guard, one of the ablest newspapermen in Singapore, was manager of the United Press. Incidentally, he was an Englishman although he represented an American news service.

After one heated conference with Colonial Secretary Jones, Harold Guard came back and said:

“Britain is begging for America to help her in the war against Germany. America rushes Lend-Lease war material as fast as she can across the Atlantic, and what does she get in return? Stupid, blundering fools here trying to interfere with the freedom of the press in Singapore.

When the Colonial Secretary accused American newspapermen of interfering with British policy declaring, “That's the trouble with you Americans—too honest and therefore dangerous,” Guard told him that he was not an American but a British veteran of the World War. The Colonial Secretary had nothing to say.

As soon as United Press was allowed to service the newspapers, the Singapore Herald signed a contract, for I realized that in cooperating with the American news service, the Singapore Herald could present better news reports than the garbled Reuter dispatches.



And I realized that if United Press was allowed to operate in Singapore, it might lead the way for Domei Tsushin-sha to break into the Singapore field also.

Thus, with these things in mind the Singapore Herald and the Eastern News Service worked hand-in-hand with the United Press—in order to tell the truth about the war in Europe and the situation in the Far East. For United Press fearlessly called a British defeat what it was and not “a strategic withdrawal.” Of course I realized that it included a lot of American propaganda but this was omitted in our newspaper. The Herald used the United Press only for the facts of the war in Europe and relied on Eastern News for the situation in East Asia.

By this time, the Herald was recognized as the liveliest newspaper in town. Every official in Singapore subscribed to the Herald while in the evening, soldiers and sailors, Australian and Scotsman, all read the Herald.

Often brokers and businessmen would call up the Singapore Herald for the latest news and the extra editions were sold out completely before the competition could get started. Often the Herald came out with an extra edition so quickly that the Straits Times and the Malaya Tribune did not even take the trouble to print one themselves.

Due to the steady counsel of Consul-General Tsurumi, the Singapore Herald on the eve of war had rapidly developed into an influential newspaper whose editorial comments were frequently cabled throughout the world by Reuters and United Press.

Shortly following the freezing of Japanese assets by the Governments of the United States and Great Britain, the controversy between the Reuters syndicate and the Singapore Herald reached its peak.

For a long time the Singapore Herald had been dissatisfied with the service sent to it by Reuters—it was our contention that the Straits Times owners had too much voice in the type

of service supplied to newspapers in Singapore. For instance, the Straits Times went to Press at 12 noon and consequently, Reuters did not send any late news after that time. Time and time again, I wrote to the Reuters manager in Singapore, Mr. Henry, that unless Reuters improved their service, I would be forced to take action.

The appearance of United Press Service into the Singapore field brought a valuable ally for the fight against the British news service. United Press continued to supply the Singapore Herald with much last minute news. Their coverage of Washington during the critical U.S.-Japan peace talks, were of utmost service to the Singapore Herald's evening deadline.

Finally, it got to the point where Reuters would not accede to our demands and I wrote to manager Henry indicating, the Singapore Herald's decision to drop Reuters service—and to rely henceforth only on United Press Service and Eastern News Service.

This brought forth a strong protest from the Reuters manager and also brought Kenneth Selby-Walker, Far Eastern divisional manager of Reuters, down from Shanghai on the run.

A series of conferences followed and since they would not fall in with my proposals for a different type of news service—I wanted only a 12-hour coverage instead of the existing 24-hour service—I announced that the Singapore Herald would drop Reuters service as of January 1, 1942.

Selby-Walker invited me to have dinner and to talk things over about two weeks before the outbreak of war. We went to Cyrano's where we opened a good bottle of wine for Cyrano's was stocked with the wines and liquors from the captured Ill De France. We talked business, later swung over to politics and ended up by having a fine chat at his home on Grange Road.

But the Singapore Herald stood firm. Despite Selby-



Walker's wine, I calmly stood my ground. Selby-Walker threatened the Herald with dire consequences:

"If you drop Reuter's service, I'll personally see to it that the Singapore Herald will not continue publication in Singapore."

My answer to the Reuters manager was simple:

"We'll see about that."

During the course of the Washington talks, British officials in Singapore kept in close touch with the Japanese Government's policies, texts of speeches by Japanese statesmen and the progress of the discussions in the columns of the Singapore Herald since most of its edition in those days were devoted to the situation in the Far East while the Malaya Tribune and the Straits Times filled theirs with British propaganda.

Shortly before the outbreak of war, Consul-General Tsurumi was recalled to Tokyo.

The Japanese community in Singapore welcomed the new Consul-General, Suemasa Okamoto, on Thursday—and on Monday morning, all of us, including the new Consul-General, were interned.

The final week was one of frenzied excitement and activity in Singapore. Tokyo announced that the Asama Maru would be sent on December 25 for the remainder of the Japanese who wished to evacuate. Eastern News Service closed down since its Manager, Takashi Kaite, Domei correspondent in Singapore, had been recalled by his head office. Suganuma of the Osaka Mainichi was also leaving. Only Ninomiya, the Asahi correspondent, remained.

Darrell Berrigan of United Press went up to Bangkok on Tuesday and on Friday his cable was interrupted in the midst of the transmission. Guard, receiving in Singapore, immediately suspected that something had happened when the message was not repeated on Saturday. That day, about 40 Japanese sailing for Bangkok on a Thai steamer, were stopped

by a Governor's decree. Later, we learned that the Thai-Malai frontier had been closed and train service stopped.

Meanwhile, the Australian Radio and United Press reported that a huge convoy of Japanese transports was steaming south. On Sunday, British and Australian troops were ordered back to their posts. Military Police went through every theater, restaurant, cabaret and brothel in order to round up the soldiers. "All Leaves Cancelled" was the notice flashed on the screen and over the radio.

And yet the British claimed that war was a surprise. The British officials knew that the war was coming and tried desperately to hide the fact from the Asiatics.

The truth was that the conceited British commanders thought that Japan was bluffing. But Japan was not bluffing. She meant every word when she declared that unless the Anglo-Americans changed their policy it would mean war. The British in Singapore were blind and stubborn until the very end.

And so war came to Singapore.



## CHAPTER V

### SINGAPORE UNDER SIEGE

It was on February 6th, that the 1,000,000 souls in Singapore, swelled by the influx of fleeing up-country refugees, first heard the distant thunder of Japanese artillery. Singapore was now under siege.

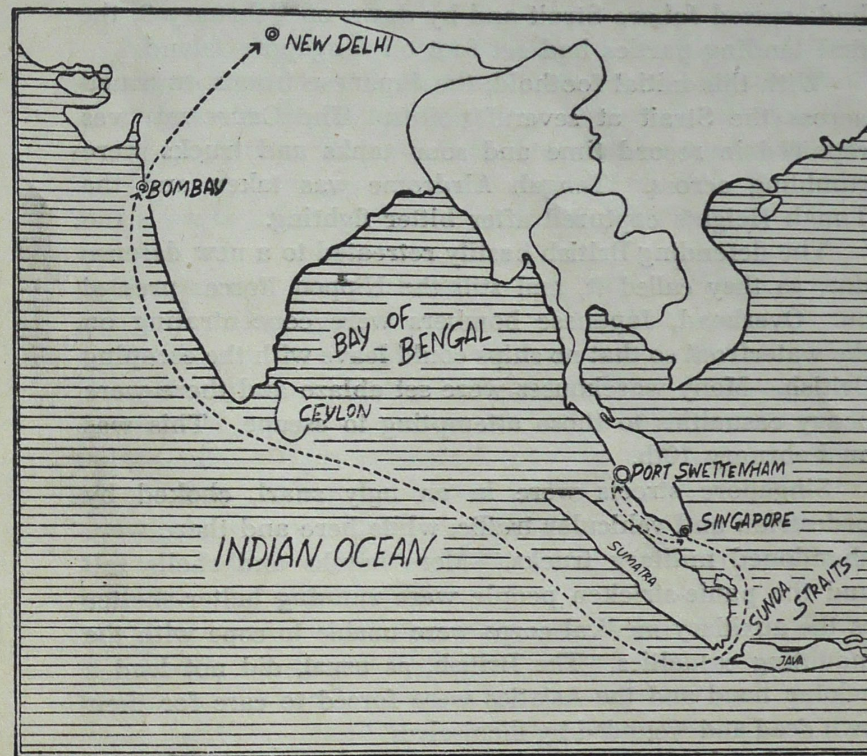
The experience of the Asiatic civilians of the island, constantly misled by false British propaganda as they braved the continuous barrage and raids, were revealed by a Chinese newspaper colleague upon my return from internment in India.

*2nd day* For nearly two months the people of Singapore had lived in daily terror of air raids—for intrepid Japanese bombers had been over in formations of from 70 to 150 planes to drop their bombs at will over vital British defense positions as anti-aircraft futilely tried to bring them down.

And now as the battle neared, there was a thick pall of smoke in the sky over Singapore for Japanese shells and bombs had set fire to oil dumps and installations. There was a shadow of gloom over the entire populace.

Sir Shenton Thomas, the British Governor, had declared "Singapore must not, shall not fall" and the people were somewhat reassured. But the advancing Japanese were now concentrating in the southern part of Johore State in the vicinity of Johore Bahru, just across the Strait from Singapore Island. The panic-stricken British forces had retreated across the Causeway and an official communique declared that the \$7,000,000 Causeway had been breached.

As Japanese shells screamed across the mile-wide Johore Straits onto the Island, British authorities ordered that the





northern coastal section of Singapore should be evacuated. Meanwhile, on February 6th, the last of the British "evacuation ships" had left Singapore, ostensibly bound for an Indian port, and the siege of Singapore was under way.

Under cover of darkness, the gallant Japanese Forces had crossed Johore Strait and by dawn on February 9, the first landing parties had set foot on Singapore island.

With this initial foothold, the Japanese troops swarmed across the Strait at several points. The Causeway was repaired in record time and soon tanks and trucks were rumbling across. Tengah Airdrome was taken and the Timah Heights captured after bitter fighting.

The defending British hastily retreated to a new defense line, as they called it, and still the Nippon Forces pressed on. Overhead, Japanese bombers were concentrating on the waterfront so that no ships could leave with the escaping British. Many warehouses were set ablaze and there were heavy casualties to those attempting to escape. This was on February 10th.

Singapore streets were in an ugly snarl, choked by pedestrian and vehicular traffic, while here and there were abandoned military trucks. More bombs and shells fell and the panic-stricken people were running helter-skelter as the auxiliary medical corps were unable to cope with the mounting casualties. The British, as usual, did not lend a helping hand and the Asiatics were forced to care for their own dead and wounded by themselves.

As the third day of the Battle of Singapore dawned, Asiatic employees went to the offices to find that their British bosses had fled, decamping with the firm's money and not even informing their local staff that they were leaving.

The publisher of the Straits Times and the manager of the Malaya Tribune, bitter business rivals, had jointly chartered a plane to take them to Java and safety.

As one of the former reporters of the Straits Times later recalled, "that morning the staff came to work as usual. We found that Seabridge had fled the night before, taking all the available cash in the safe and leaving newspapers cut to currency size in its place." He added bitterly:

"The rat!"

At any rate, the Asiatic members of the Straits Times, editorial, business and production, conferred, and decided to carry on with the newspaper as long as possible.

At the Malaya Tribune, there was similar consternation. The Jewish manager had also absconded with the cash, leaving a bewildered, sullen staff—but they had no desire to carry on.

Throughout the business section, similar stories were bared—the European "rats" had deserted, leaving their staffs to fend as best they could. There was no business in Singapore that day—for it was impossible. Bombs rained down from formation after formation of Nippon planes that came over. And now there were fires in several sections of the city. There was hardly a ship in port and the few struggling British businessmen were frantically bargaining for sampans to take them across the Malacca Straits to Sumatra.

There was sorrow and bitterness in the hearts of the Singapore people that night as refugees from the outlying sections of the island crowded into the main business section. They had been misled by British propaganda to believe that Singapore was impregnable and here their erstwhile employers had left them in a lurch and the city was wrapped in a pall of smoke—fires were burning everywhere.

Now in all their naked fickleness could be seen the empty words of the British Imperialists. Fearing for their own safety, these absconding employers had deserted, leaving the wives and children of their employees to face death.

As the fourth day dawned, conditions rapidly deteriorat-



ed in the main part of the city. Refuse filled the streets, for the sanitation service had been disrupted, and there was no water supply since the main reservoirs had been captured by the Japanese.

Thousands of deserting British troops now added to the confusion in the streets. They were grovelling in the drains, others threw their arms away and broke into warehouses where they ransacked tobacco and liquor stores. Aghast, the Asiatic population looked on as the British troops resorted to bestial cruelty. Homes were robbed, women were attacked—nothing was safe from the hands of the panic-stricken British troops.

There are many stories of heroism and bravery told by the brave people of Singapore who went through the siege of Singapore and watched Britain's Empire go crumbling down.

When the first advancing Japanese troops came through the outskirts, a Eurasian doctor offered food and water to the soldiers. Others helped in carrying supplies, in providing food and water. He told me that even his two women-folk helped in serving hot food to the Japanese soldiers as they advanced on toward the center of the city.

There was the story of a Shanghai Chinese girl who had formerly worked in a Singapore cabaret, who rallied her girl friends and organized a sewing circle. They had seen the tattered uniforms of the Japanese soldiers and they offered the facilities of their homes so that the tired, hungry soldiers could bathe and rest, and mended their torn clothes.

In sharp contrast to these kind gestures by the peaceful inhabitants of Singapore Island, the inadequacy of the provisions made by the British for the helpless people was bared under duress of battle.

The attap huts that had been so proudly erected by the British Government at a cost of \$1,500,000 taken from public

funds, so resembled barracks that the people refused to utilize them—for fear of being bombed. Just another British ruse—and many of them were situated in and near open fields which were being used as anti-aircraft batteries and as parking-space for military trucks.

So the poor, helpless masses crowded into the stairways, into basements and even into the filthy deep-drains of Singapore streets.

There were weeping mothers searching for their lost infants; there were crying tots wandering among the corpses of the dead strewn about the streets—chaos and confusion reigned.

Food was scarce. The British had hoarded much of the foodstuffs and there was little to be had. Food-hawkers did not come out into the streets and, save for a fortunate few who had canned food stock, most of them had no food for two or three days.

Old women sat praying as whistling shells dropped round about them, children dug into the debris for a bit of food and the sewerage continued to pile up in the streets.

Still the Nippon troops came on. Rumors now began to float about the desperate population. Some, still clinging to British propaganda, went around saying that the Americans had landed at Penang and that there was a battle to the rear of the attacking Japanese Forces. But more and more British troops crowded into the city, attesting to the fact that the end was not far off.

Fires increased and some had now been burning for several days, casting a ghostly glare on blacked-out Singapore. In the distance could be seen the oil tanks on Pulau Samboe going up in smoke. Silhouettes of British troops could be clearly seen against the reddening sky.

There was no sleep for the helpless civilians in Singapore at night. With the deafening din of artillery, the constant dread of raids and the noise of crackling flames



all about them, people cowed in the streets, in the stairways and in the shelters. This continued for several days as the battle raged in the suburbs.

Then came the dawn of February 15. Somehow there was a different feeling by day—somehow the noise of battle was not so fearsome as at night. And the people began to realize that the end was not far off.

Rumors circulated through the populace—that the British had asked for a surrender. And how happy the people were when an official communique was issued!

The communique read as follows:

"The G.O.C., Malaya, has left for Japanese headquarters with certain proposals. It is not yet known what terms will be agreed upon.

"Meanwhile, I am informed by General Headquarters, Fort Canning, that all units will remain in the positions which they occupied this morning."

(Signed) T. S. W. THOMAS,  
Governor.

6 p.m., February 15, 1942.

And so Singapore decided to lay down its arms. British tyranny in Singapore was brought to a close through the gallant efforts of the Japanese Forces. Among the Chinese, Eurasian, Indian and Malai people that day, there was a deep feeling of gratitude.

Long afterwards it was learned that in the last days of the Singapore siege, General Sir Archibald Wavell had flown to Singapore. He had inspected the fighting lines and had given glib assurances that reinforcements were on the way. General Wavell promised a counter-offensive on February 15 which would turn the tide. Ironically enough it was on the day of the promised counter-offensive that Lieutenant-General Percival had carried the white flag of surrender to the Ford Plant on Bukit Timah Road and had

agreed to unconditional terms of surrender imposed by Lieutenant-General Tomoyuki Yamashita, Supreme Commander of Japanese Forces in Malai.

The following incident serves to give an insight to the mentality of the British troops in the final days of the siege.

It seems that Governor Thomas had personally telephoned the editorial office of the Straits Times asking that his communique regarding the request for surrender be published.

And so the Straits Times as its last gesture published the governor's proclamation declaring that Percival had gone to Lieutenant-General Yamashita to ask for surrender.

No sooner had the newspapers appeared on the streets, than a drunken British Army Captain came bellowing into the office waving a copy of the Straits Times. A private stood alongside with a levelled Tommy gun.

"Who in the hell in the bloody fifth-columnist who published this?" he demanded.

As the bewildered, frightened Asiatic staff sought to explain, the British officer in his drunken madness, took one of them by the arm and threatened to shoot him down.

Fortunately, news came at that moment that the surrender had been signed and the British officer turned sickly away. It was a timely surrender for one Chinese newspaper editor.

After the cloud of smoke had cleared, the people of Singapore began to wonder why Percival had surrendered.

True, Lieutenant-General A. E. Percival, the British Commander-in-Chief, had revealed in his memorandum:

"While considerable efforts have been directed toward the coastal defense of Singapore prior to the current war, no defensive works were undertaken on the northern coast.

"During the course of the battle, all possible defense facility was started but when we retreated, the Singapore defenses were far from complete. . . ."



And finally, after his surrender, Percival gave the lame excuse that "the supply of water became very aggravated. On the morning of Sunday, February 15, experts were of the opinion that the supply would last only for a day, so this was the determining factor which caused us to surrender."

But the people of Singapore had seen the real reason in the panic-stricken, beaten British troops who grovelled in the drains, who cluttered up the streets and ransacked the homes. Singapore surrendered because the morale of Percival's men had cracked—they were thoroughly beaten.

It was two days later on February 17 that a crestfallen British Prime Minister Winston Churchill admitted to the world over the B.B.C. that Singapore had surrendered.

"I speak to you all under the shadow of a heavy and far-reaching military defeat. It was a British and Imperial defeat. Singapore has fallen."

## CHAPTER VI INTERNEED BY THE BRITISH

The dull detonations of bombs and the distant sound of aircraft awoke us from deep slumber about 2:30 a.m. Monday morning of December 8, 1941.

The sounds grew louder.

As I hurried into the front-room, I found Jun Ninomiya, the Asahi correspondent in Singapore with whom I was living, already there.

He stood at the front door looking up into the sky. It was a clear moonlight night.

"What is it?" I asked.

He replied that he didn't know.

Then, there was another boom not far off and then far off in the distance could be heard the fading noise of motors.

Ninomiya picked up a slip of paper from the door-sill and we turned backed into the house to read it.

It was a police notice ordering all Japanese nationals to report to the nearest police station within 24 hours.

Both of us were still perplexed.

"What's this? Japan hasn't declared war—but those planes didn't sound like British aircraft. Besides, I've never heard them at night—they wouldn't dare fly at night," I said.

Then the air-raid siren sounded.

The lights were turned off (for we had grown so accustomed to obeying Air-Raid Precautions that it had become second nature).

I suddenly thought of the radio and turned it on—but nowhere could we hear any news. Even the San Francisco radio station was silent.



Then, a happy thought struck me. Perhaps my friends at the morning newspaper would have some news. So I hurriedly dialed the Singapore Free Press Office.

There was a buzzing noise. The telephone had been disconnected.

"This really looks bad," I thought.

Both Ninomiya and myself sat in the darkness smoking cigarettes, wondering what to do.

Suddenly, I thought I would go down to the office since the motor-car was in the garage. Surely there would be some news. I hurriedly dressed and started out the front-door when I was met by a British police inspector and a squad of police with fixed bayonets.

He ordered us back in the house and told us to get our things together.

I asked him:

"What's all this about?" I asked.

He turned to me with a grim smile.

"Those booms you just heard and the planes—they were Japanese. You know what that means."

War, I thought to myself. So it's here at last.

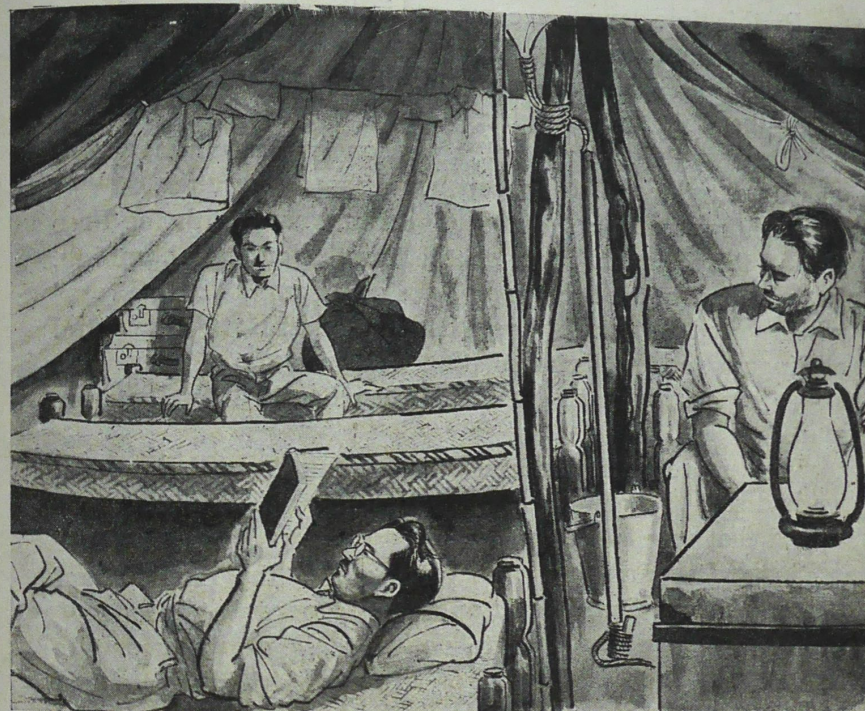
Then while the Inspector waited, Ninomiya and I packed our grips. In the excitement many things were forgotten. Plenty of neckties were taken but no underwear.

Then, between a long line of police with fixed bayonets, we were taken to a police van.

There were two buses and only two policemen rode with us while the Inspector and the rest of the police rode in the other.

Although we were but a stone's throw from the Orchard Road police station, we were taken along while the police roused the manager and sub-manager of Mitsui Bussan Kaisha as well as the manager of Nomura & Company out of bed. I hurriedly dialed the Singapore Free Press office.

Then we were taken back to the Orchard Road Police





Station where we joined the managers of O.S.K. and N.Y.K.

At the Police Station the Japanese who crowded into one room were able to discuss the question of what had happened among themselves.

By this time dawn had come and in the streets we could see motor-trucks roaring by while an occasional ricksha crept along the still deserted streets loaded with household belongings—the Chinese were already on the move.

Then, we told a Malai policeman, one of those assigned to guard us, to buy us a newspaper and some cigarettes.

He hurried across the street and came back with the Free Press—there was no news on the front about the bombing. In the corner of the back page, there was a small "Stop-Press" which stated that the Japanese had landed at Kota Bharu and at Singora and that brisk fighting was going on. There was also a report that Singapore had been bombed by Japanese planes.

Well, it looks like the real thing, we all decided, for until we had seen the news in black and white we were not convinced that war had come at last.

Soon afterwards, we were all taken to the East Wharf Immigration Station, located on the Singapore waterfront.

En route, I was able to notice a big crowd near the Orchard Road Market (later I confirmed that Killarney Road had been bombed) and also in Raffles Square a bomb had dropped, and as we passed in front of the Singapore Herald office, there was a big white notice on the door. The building appeared to be padlocked.

I waved to the staff which had been assembled in front. They appeared bewildered but as I shouted they recognized me and waved back. The Indian watchman saluted.

These Indian and Chinese shop workers had worked faithfully for the Singapore Herald since the first issue. I hoped that they would be all right.

Then we were all herded into the big Immigration shed

which had been used to keep Chinese contract laborers when they came off the immigration ships.

After being searched, questioned checked off on the police list—we were all given a tin number tag and told to wait.

When it came to my turn, the inspector in charge asked me:

"What are you doing here, aren't you an American citizen?" He knew I had come from the United States.

"Of course not, I am a Japanese," I snapped back.

Then the Japanese were numbered off into squads and marched on board one of the old Straits Steamship Company boats used on the coastwise service.

No food was given us and we were kept waiting in the hot tropical sun all day while the inefficient police rounded up all of the Japanese. Finally at night a bit of dirty curry and some rice was handed to us but most of us were not able to eat.

In the course of the investigation I saw a sight which made my blood boil.

Dr. Nishimura, an old Japanese doctor who had been an invalid for many years, was being forced by a British officer into the immigration shed with the rest of us. He could hardly walk and it was a pitiful sight but one which I decided was typical of the brutal British. Later, I learned that he had died.

No provisions had been made aboard the ship so that the internees were forced to stretch themselves on the decks where they tried to sleep in spite of the tossing sea. In addition, more than 2,000 people were crowded into the small coastwise vessel so that there was hardly room for anyone to stretch his legs.

There was much speculation as to our ultimate destination. Some ventured to suggest that we might be sent to India, others to Sumatra. At any rate, the treatment thus far accorded us boded no good for the future.



The next morning found the internee ship entering the west coast harbor of Port Swettenham. There, in the heat of a mid-day sun, we found ourselves loaded into trucks and taken to the Indian laborer quarantine camp which consisted of wooden sheds with planks for beds.

No food was given us that day and although we repeatedly asked for water, no heed was given to our requests.

The next day, after a hard night spent in discomfort, we were roused out of bed at dawn and given two buckets, one of rice gruel and the other filled with some discolored water.

Others who joined us from various parts of Malaya told us of similar harsh treatment. The group from Johore had been crowded into third-class carriages and forced to travel for a day and night without food and water. They had been confined in the Johore Bharu prison for a week. Those from Kuala Lumpur spoke of like treatment.

All of us got a good look at the camp during the days that followed. It was a group of wooden huts with a double row of barbed-wire fence with Indian and Malai guards. There was a central kitchen where some Indians were cooking food for us and it was so bad that we volunteered to do our own cooking, but even then foul-smelling fish and half-cooked rice was our only fare.

However, the Japanese soon organized themselves into groups with representative leaders and a supreme camp head who was instructed to make complaints to the commandant. The warders had been brought to us from the nearby Taiping Jail. They were unpleasant, uncivil British, typical of the crude mentality of British Malayan officials.

The days that followed were miserable and uncomfortable. Many of us wondered how long this treatment was going to last.

The days were spent in silent thought and nights in quiet contemplation of the unpleasant future.

However, the internees soon tried to make the best of the

situation and every morning, a ceremony of homage toward the Imperial Palace, to the glorious war dead and for Nippon's victory was held, followed by exercises.

Food continued to be foul and uneatable despite the repeated complaints.

Several days after our internment in this terrible Port Swettenham Camp, officials ordered us into an empty shed where we were told to surrender all our money, valuables and our baggage was searched. Money totaling more than half a million dollars in Singapore currency or more than a million Japan yen was taken from the internees who by this time comprised all the Japanese in Malaya, with the exception of Penang.

Crude, uncivil British officials ripped open our bags, took away anything which they thought of value and even forced us to surrender extra clothing. Rubber shoes and those with rubber soles were confiscated on the excuse that they could be used for escape through the electrically charged wires.

It was during this rough examination that I saw one brute of a British officer tear a crucifix from the neck of a Catholic, snatch prayer-beads from a Buddhist priest and throw a Bible onto a rubbish pile.

Here, I thought to myself, is British Christian civilization at its worst. Religious tolerance and fanciful words of democracy meant nothing to the bestial nature of Western civilization bared at last.

When our leader asked the camp commandant what the officials proposed to do with the money, we were told that it would be put in the bank for safe-keeping. That was the last we saw of our money, our watches and valuable documents.

So in this manner, a week or so passed.

News in various ways trickled into the camp. We read in a smuggled newspaper that the British air force had been routed in the initial air battle over North Malaya, we learned that Thailand, sympathetic with Nippon's mission, had joined



hands with us in the war against the British and Americans.

When the Prince of Wales and the Repulse were reported sunk off Kuantan on the Pahang coast, our joy knew no bounds. It was then we realized for the first time how speedily the Japanese Forces were routing the enemy in Malaya.

Since the Japanese from Penang had not joined us, we surmised that they had been rescued, a conjecture which we later learned was true. Somehow, these unhappy days soon slipped by—despite the miserable food, unsanitary conditions and uncomfortable beds. To indicate how dirty the water was—clothing that was washed turned red from the rust while the toilet facilities consisted of an open ditch in the ground exposed to the flies and the mosquitoes. Imagine mosquitoes breeding in open cesspools. It is a wonder that we did not all get sick.

As for our food, half-cooked rice with some vegetables floating in greasy water for soup and sometimes a small banana was all that was provided us.

Suddenly, orders came for the first group to remove camp. As I happened to be in this group, together with the rest of my comrades, I started out of the camp. We proceeded through rows of Malai volunteers all with fixed bayonets while British officers followed us with Tommy guns and loaded revolvers.

It was the hottest part of the tropical day when we were thus forced to march toward the railroad where we were pushed into steel freight cars standing on the tracks.

Thirty-five of us were locked into each of these burning steel-cars which had been standing in the sun for a good part of the day. There was no ventilation except for two tiny slips at either end, and since we were fully clothed, soon the perspiration poured down our bodies until all of us were soaked to the skin. The coal dust on the bottom of our car soon became a muddy pool as sweat from the imprisoned 35

continued to pour.

Soon it became difficult to breathe for there was only room in these tiny steel-cars for us to stand. Some of the internees began to breathe laboriously, others of us that were more hardy began to hammer on the walls to call the guards but no one took notice. Round about us, we could hear one or two slump to the floor unconscious.

Meanwhile, outside, there was not much movement. It felt as though the cars were being pushed back and forth over the same tracks.

Finally, after what appeared hours the steel-cars were halted and one by one unlocked and the internees staggered out. We were at the dock, only half a mile away from our starting point.

Many were semi-conscious and all were hardly able to walk the 25 yards to the boat but we were prodded by bayonets and ordered to move along.

I half-carried one of the older members of the group and tears trickled down my face when I thought of the torture that we were enduring at the hands of the despicable British who seemed to be grinning at us from the bridge of the dirty, battered boat which was to take us further on our journey. As we made our way up the gangplank, I saw a number of internees lying unconscious on the deck while deckhands were throwing buckets of cold water on them in an attempt to revive them. Two, I thought certain were dead, but after much resuscitation work by a Japanese doctor, they were brought back to consciousness.

As soon as all of us were aboard and safely stowed down in the hatch like a cargo of rice, the wooden stairs were removed and a wire netting placed over the opening. We were guarded by British volunteers who watched us with fixed bayonets and Tommy guns pointed toward us.

Since I spoke English, I volunteered to negotiate for our arrangements and I shouted up at a Naval officer on deck.



"What are the arrangements for our sanitation, food and water?" I asked.

"You will get two tubs of rice, and water as often as you need it. For toilet, there are a couple of empty oil drums in the corner and you'll have to make the best of it," was the curt reply.

Two tubs of rice was only enough to give the 500 of us one rice-ball apiece and a small piece of salted fish while two pails of water were lowered from time to time but was not enough to go around.

In the hatch there were sacks of American flour and sago. Crowded in the narrow quarters, the internees were coughing and sneezing, for after the stifling hour in the steel-cars, most of us had caught cold. Even two hours after our confinement in the steel-cars, many were still pouring with sweat while others were stripped to the skin with nothing on but a pair of under-shorts.

Feverish and uncomfortable, the night in that ill-ventilated hatch was the longest in my memory. As I looked around the hatch, we looked like a boatload of slaves. Finally, the next day about noon we were brought alongside the very same East Wharf in Singapore which we had left some ten days before.

Loaded into police vans and buses, we were rushed through the streets of Singapore to Changi Prison which was located about 13 miles from the main part of town. To make matters worse, it began to rain and those of us that had not caught a cold before, now began to sneeze and cough.

Eventually, we landed at the front gates of the cold, forbidding concrete Changi Prison and as the iron gates clanged down behind us, it appeared that the days ahead were indeed to be grim and forbidding.

Prison life it was—those days in Changi when we were crowded three into a cell while others slept in the corridors.

The food supplied us came only twice a day, and it was only meagre convict fare in a tin container from which we

had to eat with our fingers.

Roll-call took place at daybreak when we were forced to kneel on the ground and the warders counted us like a bunch of cows, and the nightly lock-up was at 6 when it was still light outside.

Cigarettes had run out long ago and there was nothing to break the maddening monotony of the drab prison days that followed for us. Fortunately, we were allowed in the small prison yard by day where we could enjoy the sun, but when it rained we could only stretch on the cold concrete floors.

Those that followed us from Port Swettenham brought us good news. As they were being taken from the internment camp, a formation of Japanese planes had attacked harbor facilities at Port Swettenham, machine-gunning oil tanks and setting small ships ablaze.

Some of them told us how happy they were—and frightened. Happy because this was the first time that they had caught sight of our Imperial Forces in action and frightened lest one of the machine gun bursts should hit them. But the Japanese soon flew off after giving the enemy a good dose of lead.

"It was a glorious sight to see the sun glinting on the silver Nippon planes with the Red Hinomaru sign plainly visible," one of my friends declared.

The day of our deliverance is not far off, we all thought when we heard the news.

Then, one night soon after our imprisonment, the roar of mighty planes was heard overhead and we rushed to the top floor from where we watched the first of many raids made by the Japanese bombers on vital enemy facilities at Seletar, Changi and at Alexandria. Every fire that flared up, every bomb that dropped was cheered with lusty banzais. Indeed, these nightly raids were the only things that kept our morale up.

New Year's Day in prison. To every patriotic Japanese,



this was indeed a grim experience but we all dressed as neatly as was possible under the circumstances to commemorate solemnly the new year.

That morning in the shadows of those cold prison walls, we internees paid our respects to the Imperial Palace, prayed for a speedy victory and for the gallant war dead.

In the afternoon, a makeshift athletic meet was held, so that, in spirit at least, New Year's festivities could be marked.

Somehow the days passed. We had become used to the long, empty days. And it was on January 7 that the orders came for us to move on again to an unknown destination.

Again we were loaded on to broken-down, decrepit buses and taken from Changi Prison through Tampinis Road toward upper Serangoon Road. Then as we turned in toward Thompson Road, it dawned on us that we were being led toward Selatar.

So we were. From Selatar we were loaded aboard a British transport, the former B. I. (British Indian Steam Navigation Company) ship Rajura, crammed into foul, ill-smelling hatches for a long sea voyage.

It was grim irony that many of us saw for the first time the insides of the Seletar Naval Base during war when it was prohibited to us in days of peace.

Soon afterwards, the ship got under way and when the port-holes were opened we found ourselves sailing out of the Johore Straits in a southwesterly direction.

Where were we headed? Many of us speculated. Some thought that we were going to Australia, others to Ceylon while only a few even thought of India.

Southwest through Sunda Straits, the ship sailed and finally it altered directions to due west and thus it appeared that our destination was either Ceylon or India.

In the distance we could see another ship nearing us and soon we made out the figures on deck. It was the other ship that had left the day before bearing the other half of the

Japanese internees from Changi. But this ship soon turned toward the north while we continued due west.

It was two days afterwards that some of the internees conceived the idea that an attempt could be made to seize the ship and turn back to Penang, for there were a number of fishermen abroad with sea experience. It would require only the sacrifice of a few and there were plenty of volunteers.

But after due consideration, the idea was abandoned when we realized that the people on the other ship or the women and children left behind might suffer.

Uneventful days at sea followed as the ship plowed through the calm Indian Ocean on a zig-zag course. Except for an hour on deck, we were cramped in the narrow hatches the whole day. Food consisted of unsavory curry and rice without variation. Many became sick with the bad ventilation and unsanitary conditions affecting all of us.

Finally after 20 days at sea, one morning we found ourselves at anchor in a strange port. Someone who had been to Bombay informed us that we were outside the breakwaters at Bombay, India.

For three days we were left aboard ship because the inefficient British had not made arrangements for us. But one thing comforted us. Newspapers which we purchased informed us that the Nippon forces had swept down the Malay Peninsula and were now at Gemas. At least that was the conclusion drawn from a terse item in the Times of India which stated that the R.A.F. were bombing the railway yards at Gemas. And if the British were bombing Gemas, certainly it must be in Japanese hands, we thought.

"It won't be long before Singapore falls," we all shouted, but how forlorn our hopes of return appeared at that minute as we lay at anchor in the port of Bombay!

The experiences behind us were nothing compared to those that were to come.

Long lines of military trucks lined the Bombay docks as



we disembarked and there were companies of marching British troops. Bombay, for the first time, fully brought home to us that Britain was fighting a desperate back-to-the wall war. Here behind the lines we saw young, unbearded troops being loaded onto transports for Malaya and Burma.

The huge warehouse on the docks was our immediate shelter. There we crouched in the semi-darkness for eight or nine hours while giant Sikh soldiers stood on guard with bayoneted guns.

Finally, we were loaded aboard third-class carriages with hardly room enough to stretch our legs. The night was bitterly cold and thus we learned for the first time why we were given thin blankets—for even these failed to keep us warm.

For three days and nights we travelled across the barren Indian plains with only one meal—and that of half-cooked rice and some bitter curry. That was on the first day and thereafter we were given only promises of food that never reached us.

In the course of our journey, the Indian soldiers on guard good-naturedly tried to indicate by the international language of signs that they were our friends. Since we had no Indian money, they brought us tea and some even shared their chappati (Indian bread) and curry.

As we looked upon these young Indians we realized the full portent of British colonial tyranny that sent these raw, untrained natives of India out to fight against their fellow Asiatics—with whom they had no quarrel.

The internees reciprocated with signs of understanding trying to express the fact that we were fellow-Asiatics and that we Japanese had no quarrel with the Indians.

Thus after three dreary days and nights we reached our destination in the outskirts of Delhi. As we disembarked at Nizamuddin Station, the Indian guards bade us a good-natured farewell.

Round about us there were the ruins of ancient India—overhead vultures hovered. It was a frightening scene.

But the brutal treatment of the past had prepared us for anything to come, or so we thought.

For two miles through the dirty streets of the Indian village, the internees marched, loaded down with their meager personal belongings. Many dropped during the march but the inhuman officials prodded them on.

Eventually, we reached the grim, forbidding walls of Purana Qila, a gaunt sombre fortress and through its huge stone walls, we proceeded until we found on the other side a huge tent encampment which was to be our new place of internment. The other group had reached there only the day before and soon they explained the unpleasant conditions to us.

They bared tales of suffering and privations and disclosed that their lot had been equally grim. They had disembarked at Calcutta and had been aboard the train for three days with less than the food given to us.

That night we slept in canvas tents on beds of straw while the cold wind swept through the barren Indian plains. Food was rice and undigestible beans—after days of starvation.

Two nights later, the women and children arrived at the Purana Qila Camp. It was a never-to-be-forgotten scene.

The officials had told us that the women and children would arrive that evening and preparations had been made for their coming. Tents had been erected, food cooked and hot water boiling. Hours passed and still they did not arrive. Finally, it was long past midnight—and the day January 27, on the coldest night of the year. There was the sound of motorbuses and the shouts of greetings.

The first woman to get out of the bus was a pregnant young Japanese woman carrying an infant in her arms and leading a barefoot child by the hand. Then followed two children, holding hands, and looking bewilderedly about for



their father.

Women and children came—hungry, cold and ragged. For days they had been on a small, cramped ship in the charge of heartless spinster British officials and then three days and nights on the train from Calcutta. The cruel women officials had even kicked them when they gave orders.

Wives ran into the arms of their husbands from whom they had been separated for forty days. Mothers cried as they were comforted by their sons.

It was an unforgettable sight to see these helpless victims of the brutal British stagger into camp. It was nearly dawn when the last of the women and children had been safely taken care of.

As long as I live, I shall remember that scene—a cold night on the Indian plains, hungry, cold, ragged Japanese children crying in the darkness while aged women, some well past sixty, carried heavy burdens on their backs, and tiny infants wailed in mothers' arms.

So this was British justice and decency. So this was British humanitarianism. It was no wonder that the people of East Asia, led by Nippon, had risen up in revolt at last.

Soon the encampment was swelled by the addition of internees from Burma, Ceylon, Bombay and Calcutta, making the entire total of Japanese in confinement nearly 3,000, including about 900 old women and children.

Purana Qila was formerly an ancient Indian fortress whose battered battlements have been standing for nearly 2,000 years. Here where the ancient history of India had been made—a modern history of British cruelty and bestial brutality was being recorded.

Here in the shadows of the crumbling monument to India's ancient splendor, some 3,000 Japanese nationals from Malaya, Sarawak, Andaman Islands, Burma, Ceylon, India, and Iran were gathered. In the group there were aged Japanese women who had lived industriously and

peacefully in the Malayan jungles for more than 30 years, yet they were torn by the British from their familiar surroundings, to die slowly here in the middle of the great Indian plain. There were hard-working fishermen from Singapore, more than 800, who had spent all their lives at sea and were stagnating on land. There were young clerks, full of spirit, who had followed the brilliant Malai campaign and longed to get into the war. There were prominent men of position in the Japanese business world—bankers, merchants and rubber experts—who were reduced to the bare living of a convict-existence due to the inhumanity of our British captors. There were teachers, doctors, newspapermen and lawyers—all forced to do menial labor in camp under the cruel direction of the brutal British.



## CHAPTER VII

### IN THE SHADOWS OF ANCIENT INDIA

Purana Qila Internment Camp, enclosed by walls of crumbling stone, stretched for about 40 acres of which less than half was allotted to the internees while the rest was given over to living quarters for the guards and officials set to watch over us.

Most of the internees were in small, crowded tents—six and often eight where only two or three could be comfortable, while others were forced to seek shelter beneath the dangerous loose stones of the fortress walls.

All around the camp and even where the high sixty-foot walls stood, Indian sentries patrolled 24 hours a day. Once every hour, a British officer walked around the guard perimeter. At one end of the encampment there was a group of brick and mud huts which served as kitchens while toilets and bathrooms had been erected in another corner—but the toilets were always out of order and the bathing facilities not even adequate for a third of the number.

Food had originally been prepared by grimy Indian cooks but many of the Japanese volunteered to work in the kitchen, rather than eat the undigestible mess cooked up by the unskilled cooks.

Salt, sugar, tea, rice, meat, vegetables, etc., were allotted us but when it was rationed out among the internees, there was hardly a trace of it. So day after day, our meals consisted of a small helping of rice and soup from meat bones and scraps of vegetables. We were fortunate if the food went around twice a day.

There was a tremendous amount of graft by officials

in the supply of provisions and foodstuffs and while the internees were supposed to get good materials, often the meat was spoiled, the vegetables rotten or else the rice was filled with pebbles—probably to make up for the weight shortage. Frequently, beans were substituted for vegetables, and until the enterprising Japanese started to manufacture “miso” and to raise bean-sprouts, meals consisted of rice and a gelatinous mass of beans cooked in water.

But the food was the least of our problems. The internees had been brought to India in the midst of India's bitter cold winter. There were hardly enough blankets to go around and many of the internees slept with their clothes on. And even in temperate climate, tents, at best, are not fit for long habitation—especially for the aged and sick.

However, the camp was organized and the entire group divided into three wings and a women's division. Each had a British or Indian commander and a Japanese leader. A camp headquarters was formed and a secretariat established to take care of camp routine such as registration and daily roll-call. A supreme camp leader was chosen to represent the internees in conferences with the camp commandant. Slowly the camp settled down to some sort of routine.

With the poor food, bitter cold and cruel treatment, illness increased and the small camp hospital was inadequate to cope with the situation. A small section of the fortress walls had been converted into a makeshift camp hospital with only 30 beds for an internment camp of 3,000.

A young Indian doctor was in charge, assisted by an Anglo-Indian woman physician and three nurses. Hospital facilities were crude and medical supplies inadequate. When the hospital overflowed, the sick were left segregated in special tents within the camp.

Japanese doctors, nurses and dressers volunteered to assist in looking after the sick but the authorities would not allow



them even to carry thermometers while no amount of medical skill could compensate for the lack of medicines.

The Indian doctor was sympathetic and tried to do his best but the Anglo-Indian woman doctor was vindictive in her attitude.

A wailing child was brought to her.

"This child has rickets," the doctor diagnosed.

"Give her some orange-juice and cod-liver oil—and plenty of fresh milk."

As I happened to be interpreting at the time, I cried out:

"What do you mean? Where can we get oranges, cod-liver oil and fresh milk?"

She merely shrugged her shoulders and replied:

"That's for you to worry about."

This was typical of the treatment received. The child died in about a week's time.

Although the Anglo-Indian physician was supposed to be a specialist, she diagnosed a pregnant mother's condition as ready for birth that day. The mother was rushed to the maternity hospital and the hospital sent her back with a note—not ready for two weeks.

Such was medical attention for the internment camp.

In the hospital, conditions were not much better. Despite hostile superiors and futile orders, the Indian doctor tried to do his best.

"All I can do is keep the sick from dying—I can't even attempt to cure them," he admitted. "What can I do without medicine?"

So the aged, sick and undernourished died without proper care while frantic relatives looked helplessly on.

Flies were thick in the hospital, which did not even possess adequate sanitation facilities. The toilet was only an uncovered bucket in the corner while bed pans lay uncleared until the next need for them arose.

Sheets were changed only once a week regardless of the number of patients so that more than once a sick man was covered with the sheets from the bed where a patient had just died.

Bandages were at a premium so that usually soiled bandages were rinsed in water and used over again. There were times when sores and cuts were so numerous that the staff did not even stop to rinse them out; they merely turned the bandages over and used them on the next patient.

Dressers were young untrained Indian orderlies from the New Delhi hospital who were more interested in sleeping in the corner rather than in tending to their work. One young Japanese woman lost her finger because gangrene had set in. The Indian dresser had merely swabbed the wound caused by a tight-fitting ring, not even attempting to remove the cause of the infection.

The woman called my attention to it in Japanese and I immediately summoned the doctor. He looked at it—gangrene was his diagnosis—merely because the dresser did not know what was causing the infection. Too late the ring came off and with it the young woman's finger.

As warmer weather set in, troubles trebled, for with India's unkilld flies, dysentery swept the camp. In camp, broken flush toilets were filled with excrement all day long in the boiling sun while flies buzzed about. Protests were registered but no attempt was made to fix them. Finally after weeks of complaint, an Indian sweeper was ordered to flush them with buckets of water but one man for 3,000 internees, most of them suffering from diarrhoea and dysentery, was only a gesture.

The hospital took on aspects of a mad-house. There were no provisions for special diets and many of the sick went without food. As soon as one patient died, there was another to take his place even before his bed had grown cold. It was



not unusual for a dysentery case to die within a week.

After a patient had died, the body was taken outside into a small tent where it remained until a bus or truck could call for it with a wooden coffin. Often, a body would lay exposed for four or five hours before it could be properly removed.

Then, accompanied by mourning friends and relatives, the body would be taken to the outskirts of Old Delhi where the body was cremated in the open air.

Those who had gone to the cremation returned with alarming stories of the stench of burning flesh. A dozen or more bodies were burning in the same vicinity—there was no attempt to consider the feelings of the bereaved wife or mother. Usually, a Japanese priest was allowed to officiate at the final rites but in the surroundings, it was impossible to pay proper respect to the dead.

The next day the next-of-kin would be allowed to go to the cremation spot to gather up the bones and ashes—if they were still left, for vultures flew overhead.

Such, then, was the attitude of the British toward the victims of their maltreatment and cruelty.

Despite British hatred that heaped abuse and mistreatment upon us, the internees resolved to keep their morale up.

Every morning following roll-call, there would be the ceremony of paying homage to the Imperial Palace, prayers for the glorious war dead and for Nippon's victory. This was followed by radio gymnastics.

Newspapers were distributed and the Japanese newspapermen in camp went to work so that the news as meagerly reported in the official Calcutta Statesmen could be properly interpreted. Takashi Kaite, Domei correspondent at Singapore, and Yoshiro Royama, Domei correspondent in Bombay, daily gave news commentaries which were greatly

appreciated by the entire camp.

Those who had money, and there were only a handful, consisting of those who came from Burma and India (the majority who had come from Malaya, numbering well over 2,500, had had all their money taken from them at Port Swettenham) were allowed to make purchases at the canteen.

Some helped prepare food in the kitchens while others served on the camp sanitation squad, as interpreters in the hospitals and as teachers in classes for various languages such as Malai, Burmese and Hindustani. The children of the camp were taught by teachers of the Singapore Kokumin School who were also interned with us.

Thus the days passed.

Despite hardships, the Japanese managed to maintain their morale largely due to the brilliant victories of Nippon's Forces as they swept through Malaya, Java and the Philippines.

Kigensetsu was solemnly commemorated with due ceremony. Here, thousands of miles from home, some 3,000 Japanese subjects stood at attention, sang the Kimigayo and lifted three banzais, as the grim walls of India's ancient fortress looked down upon the assemblage.

For days there had been little or no news of the siege of Singapore. Terse British communiques had admitted that they had fled across the Johore Causeway and that the Japanese were at the very threshold of the island in Johore Bahru.

Many of us knew that a mighty battle was being waged for Singapore, and some of the more optimistic ventured to suggest that Singapore would fall on Kigensetsu.

On February 16, the Calcutta Statesman carried a brief Reuters item stating that all communications with Singapore had been severed. So Singapore had fallen at last, we believed.



And it was two days after the fall of Singapore that Winston Churchill made that historic broadcast to the world:

"I speak to you all under the shadow of a heavy and far-reaching military defeat. It was a British and Imperial defeat. Singapore has fallen."

To those of us who had lived and suffered under British tyranny in Malaya, it was a day long to be remembered.

"It marks the end of British Imperialism in East Asia," all of us commented. After that, further war news seemed to be kept out of the newspapers and there was little to keep us informed concerning the campaign in the Philippines, in Java and elsewhere in the East Indies. The Burma fighting, since it was close at hand, was fairly well reported but in the usual garbled British fashion.

Finally on March 10, we learned that communications with Bandoeng had been severed—prelude to a usual British admission of a surrender. Tacit admissions of anti-Axis defeats were as rare then as now.

Rangoon was bombed. Ceylon had her first air raid. Indian coast cities received their baptism of fire from Nippon Forces. The aircraft-carrier *Hermes* was sunk. These were the news reports that filled our hearts with jubilation. Most of us had ceased to rely on the propaganda-filled *Calcutta Statesman* and waited till the *Hindustan Times* was smuggled into camp by sympathetic Indians.

By means of this truthful Hindu newspaper, we learned about the rising of the Indian masses against British oppression. Yoshiro Royama, Domei correspondent in Bombay, interpreted for us the various movements in India and the present struggle between the National Congress and British rule. It was during this period that I read books on India such as those dealing with her history and Pandit Nehru's *Autobiography* which gave me an understanding of the Indian independence movement.

An Indian doctor revealed in confidence that he listened to Japanese broadcasts every night and often brought bits of interesting news such as Dai-Honyei announcements.

The *Hindustan Times* revealed the chaos in the land. When Indian coast ports were bombed nearly 80 per cent of Madras evacuated, tying South Indian traffic into a snarl which took three days to remedy.

As Japanese Forces pushed across Burma, the exodus from Calcutta to the Bengal hinterland began.

Indians asked, "when are the Japanese coming?"

It was amusing to see how the petty Indian officials started to study Japanese in earnest. One even learned the katakana. It was not strange to have the Indian doctor ask his Japanese patients such questions as:

"Netsu arimasu ka?" (How you a fever?)

"Tsuji nankai arimashita ka," (How many bowel movements have you had.)

The doctors and nurses would often ask about Nippon and I would try in my own small way to enlighten them on Nippon's gigantic mission in East Asia. In return, they would try to get as much information of the outside world as possible for us.

Later, when the American airmen were stationed in New Delhi, the Anglo-Indian nurses revealed how the girls were being molested on the streets. They related how the arrogant Americans would push Indians off public conveyances while drunken Yankees invaded even the privacy of the Anglo-Indian Club because beer was cheap there.

The labor problem was getting acute because the Americans offered ridiculous wages to Indians to desert their employment and work for the Americans. A huge bonus was posted for the contractor who could build barracks in the shortest time.

The price level of foodstuffs kept soaring because the American troops usually foraged throughout the city in



military trucks buying up provisions. There was a shortage, these Indians told us, because no ships were coming from Australia where India had gotten much of her food, while ships from Britain were rare. Sometimes ships came from Capetown.

When Chiang Kai-shek and Soong Mei-ling visited the Viceroy of India, there was much press ballyhoo but little public interest save curiosity. When the gigantic, so-called "United Nations Parade" was held in New Delhi, the nurses, even refused to attend. Later they reported that only Europeans attended and Indians only out of curiosity.

Anglo-American machinations in the Indian capital had aroused the masses against the anti-Axis nations.

"It's bad enough to have the British rule us, let alone having the Americans force themselves upon us," seemed to be a general consensus of opinion.

Warmer grew the weather. And the privations of the internees grew. No longer were the clothes clean, many persons were dressed in rags. Children looked unkempt and even pretty young girls ignored their make-up. Mental torture and physical sufferings occupied the minds of all the internees. Many rapidly lost weight due to the poor food while others were confined to their beds. Sores and festers from the unhealthy ground increased and all medical care failed to heal them. Lean, haggard looks appeared on the faces of many. Months of privation had taken their toll and the death rate had increased.

The weather added to the discomforts of the internees in that Purana Qila encampment. In the first place, all accommodations were hazardous makeshift arrangements, including the tents, hospital and sanitation. In addition, the great Indian plains suffered from extremities of weather—from the freezing cold of mid-January to the blazing heat of mid-July, interspersed with dust storms and hail-storms.

If one can imagine the freezing cold of New Mexico's

plateau, the inferno of California's Imperial Valley with the ferocity of a Kansas dust-storm—one can nearly approximate the weather conditions through which the internees struggled.

A word about these dust-storms. Usually, it would come on a quiet afternoon when there was not a cloud in the sky. Suddenly toward evening, there would be seen a dark yellowish cloud high in the sky.

Someone would excitedly shout as it was discovered. Then there was a mad frenzy as everyone hurried to their tents, but before five minutes had elapsed, the storm would be upon the camp. Tents would be blown down, tent-poles would snap and meanwhile there would be a heavy cloud of sand and dust, not unlike a heavy yellow fog, which penetrated even into the tents.

Sometimes, these dust-wind storms were accompanied by a hail-storm of unusual ferocity. One had to go about with a tin pail over his head for the pellets of hail were the size of golf-balls. Tents were torn, trees uprooted and bruises suffered in the course of these storms.

Then the great Indian monsoon swept through the plains. Where once we had roasted in the thin canvas tents, now we were deluged by the tons of rain-water that poured down for weeks at a stretch. It was a monsoon-season at its worst.

Tents were blown down, others collapsed as the deluge continued. Many had to take refuge in the crevices and caves of the encircling fortress walls. On one occasion, the rains continued for such a long time that water in our tents rose up to the level of the beds and it was only a miracle that all of us were not swept away.

And the British officials had the audacity to tell us that it was the most unusual monsoon season. Only when the rains had abated, would the officials pay any heed to our complaints—and then they belatedly laid a floor of bricks and dirt! Till then, while the rain water sloshed through the tents, we had



to dig trenches and embankments to keep the waters from rising on to the tent floors.

Clothes and personal belonging became mildewed, for by this time everything had been thoroughly dampened by the continuous rains. Whenever the sun made a brief appearance, all of the clothes and blankets had to be aired in the sun and the green mildew scraped from our shoes and bags. It was a pathetic life.

Japanese youths tried hard to keep morale up. Baseball games were started and the internees turned with keen sports interest to the "Koshien series" and to an inter-provincial tournament. On Sundays, entertainments were given. These were artificial means of stimulus. We had asked for motion pictures and they were refused. We had asked for books and none were forthcoming. We had asked for phonograph music and only toward the end of the year were we able to purchase one gramophone.

Barbers turned to their trade, tailors were busy mending ragged clothes while the dentist tried to keep cavities filled. Shoemakers also started work but usually they were repairing wooden clogs since most of the shoes had been worn bare.

Days passed into weeks, weeks into months. The account of how the Japanese internees kept up their morale and kept living despite the empty days is a tribute to Japanese patience and discipline.

These days taught me a great lesson. I was really seeing the indomitable Japanese spirit in moving action as, unbowed by adversity and brutal treatment, the Japanese internees faithfully followed the Nippon Forces as they swept across the Southern Regions. Every victory was food for their hungry stomachs, every triumph salve for injuries at the hands of the crude British officials.

One British official, more sympathetic than the rest, confided one day:

"I don't see how you Japanese keep going. It must be

the spirit that makes your armies victorious. How can we ever defeat a people like the Japanese."

This was the sentiment of a Britisher who had lived with the Japanese and had followed their daily struggle with interest. He had also learned something of the Japanese spirit that had set all East Asia on fire to rid the region of insidious Anglo-American influences.

The Englishwoman in charge of the women's wing, in an unguarded moment, sighingly wondered: "We can't win at this rate—how will this awful mess ever end."

I answered her frankly, "When Britain is ready to sue for unconditional surrender like they did at Singapore."

She looked at me quizzically but she did not refute my statement.

Bodies grew weaker, exposed to malnutrition and the elements. It was a pitiful sight to see young girls aging with privations, while youths in their prime wasted away. Older men and women slowly succumbed to British inhumanity, and during the first ten months of internment more than 60 died from various causes.

In heat and dust, in storm and cold, the bodies of the Japanese internees grew weaker and weaker. More and more were unable to appear at early morning roll-calls. More and more fell prey to the filth and disease of India. Inadequate hospital and sanitation facilities spurred the ravages of illness.

In the heat of the Indian summer, time hung heavy on the internees' hands.

Weary feet shuffled in the dust of the camp. Weight was lost, sleepless nights were suffered while the food continued to grow worse. "How long, how long will this treatment continue?" all the internees asked.

The daily routine was monotony itself. The camp was roused out of bed every morning at 7:30 a.m. by a roll-call and inspection. Then, some of the more energetic went through calisthenics, while others turned to camp chores—



policing, sprinkling the grounds, kitchen duty and washing.

Then, hungry and bored, the internees would await the first meal of the day at 11 a.m. which usually consisted of soup and a plate of rice, sometimes vegetables. After the tin cup and plate were washed and put away, the internees either visited friends in other parts of the camp, or else dozed under the hot sun.

Around 4:30 or 5 p.m., the second and last meal of the day was served which consisted of tiny bits of meat and vegetables boiled or stewed, with the usual plate of rice. In the evenings, cards would be played under the dim flood lights and at 10 p.m. curfew would be sounded and all lights would be extinguished.

Many could not sleep at night for this dreary idle life brought on insomnia. While in the battlements round about us, lizards and monkeys cried in the night. It was a fearsome sound. There were many nights when groups used to sit out in the moonlight, brooding over the misfortunes of internment.

As dawn broke over the eastern skies, some of the older, hardy men would start to take constitutional walks around the camp perimeter. Full credit must be given to some of these older men who continued their daily routine of walking, their sole means of exercise.

Then there was a cup of rice gruel, at the sacrifice of rice at the two meals. But many preferred to forego the breakfast of rice gruel in order to have sufficient rice at the two meals. It was a choice of either one or the other.

Evenings were spent in discussion. The heat of the day often precluded any mental exertions and it was only in the cool of the night that camp philosophers and prognostics made their appearance.

Our bodies grew tired. Clothes became ragged and soiled. Many were reduced to wooden clogs and shorts in efforts to make their meagre clothing last through the years. Less and

less activity was seen within the camp. Many of the souls were weary, spirits were broken and bodies exhausted by cold and heat.

As an instance, my weight in Singapore was 168 pounds. When I weighed myself just before repatriation, the scales read 129 pounds—which is typical of the loss in weight. Feet were infected from the filthy Indian soil and sores developed on the body while the indigestible food brought on intestinal disorders.

But the hospital was far too crowded with urgent cases for it to care for the chronic cases of illness such as ulcers, gastritis, tuberculosis, fevers—these were left exposed to the camp.

Sometimes, bread and tea were purchased out of the three rupees monthly given us as allowance. Then, we would painstakingly brew the tea and toast the bread over an open-fire and enjoy every morsel. These, and the occasional book brought into the camp, were our only joys.

The days stretched out into months. How much longer were we to endure all this, we wondered. Some had even resigned themselves to the inevitable fate—internment for the duration of the war, while others spurred by successes of the Japanese Forces hopefully believed that our repatriation would be hastened.

But to our tired bodies, anything was acceptable. Many of us had become resigned to the semi-civilized life of an internee, living amid the filth and dust of a deserted Indian fortress.



## CHAPTER VIII

### LONG JOURNEY HOME

Finally after eight months of interment in India during which time the weather had varied from winter's bitter cold to the torrid heat of the Delhi summer, when the temperature hovered about the 120 degree Fahrenheit mark, word came that the first Anglo-Japanese exchange had been negotiated and that the first batch would return home shortly.

The internees had suffered much in the past eight months, physically and mentally. There had been cold and heat, monsoon and dust-storms, happiness and sorrow. Yet, when the announcement was finally made that 800 of us were to return to Japan, there were mingled feelings for we realized that more than 2,000 would be left behind—to face other winters and summers, with monsoons and dust-storms.

Just before our departure from the Purana Qila Internment Camp, Blades, ex-Inspector of the Singapore Special Branch, one of the British scoundrels who had managed to run away from Singapore before the fall, called me outside the camp.

He said that he would like to talk to me. I went with him.

He started off by asking me where my parents were and I told him that they were probably interned in the United States.

"Would you like to see them?" he asked.

"Naturally," I answered.

"It can be done," he continued in his oily voice.

"What is this, a proposition?" I asked.

"Well, listen," he went on.

"I'll see to it that you can go back to the United States to join your family. And we will give you American citizenship," he said. "If you do a little work for us."

"Wait a minute," I interrupted. "If you think that you can talk me into turning traitor to my country, you have another guess coming."

"Don't you think that you are a bit too late? I never did like the British and since my two years in Singapore, I have learned to detest them. During my ten months of internment, I have really found out how despicable and brutal the British can be. Even the Americans can't be as bad as you British."

I walked off toward camp, showing clearly that the conversation was at an end.

At my last remark in which I said that the Americans were not as bad as the British, ex-Inspector Blades returned several days later with a fat American who appeared to be an Army officer or at least a secret agent.

He talked to me politely and I also spoke in guarded but polite tones. He asked me about my schooling in the United States and he asked me whether I would be interested in some American magazines. I thanked him for any magazines offered me, for I thought I might be able to get some more news of the war in addition to the meagre Reuter news. He offered me good American cigarettes which I accepted.

Then he started on—in a vein similar to Blades.

I spoke bluntly and frankly.

"My childhood was spent in the United States and I received my education there for which I am grateful. Today, your country and mine are at war—and you would not expect me to be a traitor to my own country, would you?"

I continued:

"There is more involved in this war than mere politics and economics. Japan is fighting today for the sake of all of





East Asia and I think that you don't need to be told about Japan's brilliant victories which even your own newspapers can't conceal."

The American, called himself Mr. Smith, smiled and sent me back to my camp.

About a week later, I received one National Geographic Magazine. The rest had been stopped by the camp censor.

Thus ended a British attempt to coerce me into their nefarious schemes.

Later, I learned that they were interested in getting a Japanese to help with broadcasting and with propaganda work. Perhaps, they had had me in mind, I don't know.

After several weeks of preparation, the final selection of the 800-odd to return was made and early in August, the journey home was started.

The parting was a tearful one, as one by one, we slipped through the wire-fence and made our way toward the military lorries which were to take us to the trains.

Tears streamed down the faces of those left behind, while those who were returning home fully sympathized with those left behind. But they sent us off with shouts of banzai.

An incident occurred that day in the hospital which has been etched deeply into my memory.

A patient with dysentery was lying in his hospital bed. The doctor asked me to interpret and I told him that he was one of those selected to return.

The doctor said that he was not physically fit to travel but that he would not prevent him if the patient wished to travel.

"There is every possibility that the strain of the journey will be too much for him.

"And yet on the other hand," the doctor continued, I would not guarantee that he will survive. His case is very serious."

I told the sick Japanese what the doctor had said.



He asked that another man be given his place but I informed him that the commandant had ordered that none but those on the list would be allowed to return.

Then he made up his mind.

If die I must, I would rather die at least a few miles closer to Japan. If the doctor doesn't mind, I'd like to go along."

We buried that poor man at sea in Madagascar Channel and, strangely enough, farther from Japan than India, but within two days of Lourenco Marques where, if alive, he would have caught a glimpse of the Japanese flag as it waved proudly from the Tatuta Maru.

How different our journey home proved to be in contrast to our earlier experience. The train was still dirty and uncomfortable and the food meagre but our hearts were happy. Were we not homeward bound?

The City of Paris, which stood alongside the Bombay docks, was a grimy old transport. And again we were thrown into the hatches but this time we could stand any discomfort.

As our train pulled into Bombay, we noted a certain tenseness in the air. The latest newspaper informed us that Gandhi and other Indian Congress leaders had been imprisoned again. The Indian masses were clamoring so loudly for Britain's withdrawal from India that the British authorities had finally resorted to imprisonment of the Mahatma and his faithful leaders.

Tanks and trucks lumbered through the streets. The warehouses and public buildings were heavily guarded. At a street-crossing, I stopped to talk with a young British soldier who stood watching us.

"We're going home," I cried out happily when he asked me where we were bound.

"Home," the young British soldier replied sadly, "I don't know when or if I'll ever see home again."

He was just one of the thousands of homesick, weary youths who had been conscripted and sent out to fight an Imperialist war in East Asia for which they had no enthusiasm.

Days aboard the City of Paris were tranquil ones. The food was a bit better than the prisoners' fare which had been our lot for many months. But there were still Indian sentries on duty.

As the City of Paris plowed through the quiet Indian Ocean, we had six burials at sea. The course of the City of Paris was marked by the ocean graves of the brave souls of Japanese internees who had succumbed to the cruel treatment of the British.

One internee was buried at Lourenco Marques and four others somewhere in the bottomless deep of the Indian Ocean.

Lourenco Marques in Portuguese East Africa! As we sailed into the harbor, we saw rusting British and American freighters lying at anchor because they could not venture out into the Indian Ocean—for fear of Japanese submarines.

And then we saw in the distance, a white gleaming ship, towering over the others—it was the Tatuta Maru with the Japanese flag floating proudly from the mast. As the City of Paris slowly steamed into port, there was a welcoming shout of banzai from the ship's crew—it was a happy moment.

Upon landing, Portuguese authorities gave us the freedom of the port. For five glorious days we enjoyed Portuguese hospitality. There were evenings along the coast where we drank delicious Portuguese wine, ate delicious dinners and danced to the strains of music under a tropical African moon; sightseeing in the African hinterland, shopping in the many shops of the city and drives out into the countryside.

But for the Japanese newspapermen Lourenco Marques



meant work. After 10 months of enforced silence, Tokyo besieged them with cables which had to be answered. Axis newspapermen as well as British correspondents were stationed in the city. The neighboring Union of South Africa wielded a good deal of influence on the Portuguese Colony but the authorities managed to maintain neutrality. Neutrality plays, a vital role in Portuguese East Africa. As Lisbon is the gateway to Europe, so Lourenco Marques looks out on the vast Indian Ocean, with all of Europe and Africa behind her.

The Stefani News Agency issued a daily news bulletin in Portuguese and English while English newspapers from neighboring South African cities had a wide circulation. Italian newspapermen were particularly generous in affording facilities to the visiting Japanese Press. In addition, the Stefani staff members were hosts to several of us while we were in Lourenco Marques. One particular night stands out vividly in my mind, a typical African night with a big orange moon and the distant tom-tom of African drums. At the dinner table we drank a toast to "Our Victory."

As we walked through the clean streets of Lourenco Marques, enjoyed its coffee shops and shopped in its stores, we marvelled at the colonial administration of the Portuguese and more at their strict neutrality.

Our Axis informants told us that about 14 anti-Axis vessels had been sunk within the past two weeks in waters off Lourenco Marques. They stated that no one was aware of the fact that these sinkings had taken place—because the British Press was silent—until survivors came to Portuguese East Africa. One by one these British and American ships attempted to run through the naval blockade only to be sunk.

I asked one of our new friends what nationality the submarines were.

He replied: "Either Japanese, German, French or

Italian."

His guess was as good as mine, but I had a feeling that they were Japanese—here way off at the other end of the Indian Ocean.

In turn, I told him that we had passed a big British convoy of 11 or 12 ships heading north just before we entered Madagascar Channel. Subsequently, there was a report that this convoy, destined for the Soviet Union via Iran with Lend-Lease war materials, had been attacked and the majority of the ships sunk.

But soon our days in sunny Lourenco Marques were at an end.

Alongside the Tatuta Maru stood the grimy City of Paris and the aged El Nil which had brought Japanese and Thai repatriates from Europe. They provided a sharp contrast—the dirty, dingy little British ships and the clean, spruce Tatuta Maru. No doubt it served to indicate the rising strength of Nippon as contrasted with the decadent weakness of Britain as a sea and world power.

Sir Robert Craigie, former British Ambassador in Tokyo, was gloomily observed on the upper deck of the El Nil during the transfer. I wondered what he was thinking as he watched the spirited Japanese and the depressed Britishers going from one ship to another?

The Tatuta Maru's welcome overwhelmed us all. Japanese food cooked as only Japanese experts know how—clean beds and cabins, newsreels in the evenings and books, magazines and newspapers covering the period from the very outbreak of the War of Greater East Asia up to the present.

Every day aboard the Tatuta Maru brought new strength surging back into our tired bodies. There was a glow in the eyes of every repatriate. It was simply wonderful to be going home again.

The spirit of friendship and goodwill between the young Thai students and the Japanese was an expression of



Greater East Asia in actual operation. There were many friendships made aboard that ship that will long continue.

Fourteen eventful days of sailing and after nine months and a half we sailed into Singapore harbor, now known as Shonan-ko.

Hinomaru flags were waving from every ship in the busy harbor. Tugs and launches came out to greet us. There were shouts of joy as the ship neared the quay.

But in the midst of all this joy, there was a sombre note. Another Japanese victim of British tyranny had breathed his last. Even while the Tatuta Maru was sailing into Shonan harbor, the priest was intoning prayers for the repose of his soul.

As we saw the bustling scene in the harbor, we wondered if war had really come to the city. Yes, here were the charred ruins of a warehouse, but right alongside a new, brick building was going up. There was the noise of rivets and of many chugging tugs. Shonan was in the midst of reconstruction.

## CHAPTER IX SHONAN—SENTINEL OF THE SOUTH

Shonan stands today as the political and economic capital of the Southern Regions. Where once the corrupt British officials ruled supreme, the efficient Japanese Military Administration has brought reform and reconstruction in a remarkably short space of time.

Immediately upon disembarking from the Tatuta Maru, repatriated Japanese newspapermen made a tour of new Shonan. Proceeding first to the Chureito atop Bukit Timah Heights, homage was paid to Nippon's gallant war dead. Then continuing over the Johore Causeway, to the War Memorial marking the spot where the first landing party had made the historic crossing of the mile-wide Johore Strait, we visited Bukit Serene, one of the Johore Sultan's Palaces, from where Lieutenant-General Yamashita had watched the crossing operations. Returning to Johore Bharu, we saw the grim scars of war on numerous buildings but already the enterprising inhabitants had returned to normal occupations.

After obtaining special permission, we made a visit to the Navy Base at Seletar where we had been put aboard the transport for our long journey to India.

The Navy ensign flew from the top-masts of the Navy Base—built at great expense by the British and abandoned after only two weeks of fighting.

We retraced our journey over Upper Serangoon Road, through Tampinis Road until we came out to Changi where we called on the commandant of the civilian internment camp.



At the massive iron gates of the Changi Prison, we breathed a prayer of thanksgiving that we had been repatriated so soon after our trials and tribulations.

Ninomiya-San of the Asahi Shimbun and I returned to our former home. There was a German engineer of the Ishihara mining interests living there. His wife was gracious enough to allow us to look into the bungalow and we found that every inch of our furniture had been removed. Later, we learned that all our property had been sold at auction shortly after the outbreak of war.

That noon, the returned Japanese newspapermen were luncheon guests of Lieutenant-Colonel Okubo, Chief of the Army Press Bureau. At the spacious Tonan Club (formerly the Singapore Cricket Club), overlooking the green playing fields of the Municipal Padang, we heard the splendid achievements which had taken place in the ten months of our enforced absence.

Lieutenant-Colonel Okubo appealed to us to remain and work together in the building of a greater Shonan. It was then that I resolved to leave the Tatuta Maru at Shonan, to resume the work that had been interrupted by the outbreak of war.

I visited the Asahi Shimbun office and Domei's Southern Regions office and then proceeded to the Straits Times plant where I was greeted by my former newspaper colleagues. I was happy to see the faces of many former Singapore Herald employees who were now working on the Shonan Times, English newspaper.

The editorial staff asked me when I was coming back to join them. They reminded me of a remark that I had made once before in pre-war Singapore—that someday I would sit at Straits Times editor Seabridge's desk. They led me in and I sat in the office of the absconding British editor.

Shortly afterwards, I was asked by Domei to join their staff in Singapore and on December 8, one year after the out-

break of war, I resumed editorship of the English newspaper under the direction of the Shonan Shimbun-kai.

In Shonan, it was good to see old familiar faces. Mr. Kaoru Toyoda was now deputy mayor of the Shonan Special Municipality, Mr. Ken Tsurumi, Governor of Malacca State, Dr. Kozo Ando, Chief Medical Officer, and Mr. Mamoru Shinozaki, Municipal Welfare Officer.

On the evening of our return, former prominent Japanese residents were the guests of Malacca's Governor Tsurumi. Lieutenant Nagano, sectional head of the Army Publicity Bureau, asked me to help in his department. I was only too glad to offer my assistance and worked under him for two months.

It was a pleasing thought to realize that here in reborn Shonan, I was able to help so soon in the vital work of reorganization and reconstruction.

At date of writing, Shonan has almost completely recovered from the ravages of war. Here and there one finds a few buildings in shambles while along the waterfront are seen scraps of British military trucks and planes, but the wide boulevards, magnificent buildings and expansive gardens show no scars.

Recently, in the course of my newspaper work in Shonan, I came across a group of British prisoners at work in various parts of the city. They appeared quite contented. Others were seen riding in lorries, as they came in from their camp, to make purchases of foodstuffs.

Talking to the Army officer in charge of the prisoners of war, I was told that he could not understand the psychology of the enemy soldiers.

"They declare that they have done their best, and now they only wait until the war is over so that they can go home," he explained.

I told him that in India the British had prepared elaborate camps for prospective prisoners of war but they had been



turned to other uses—for in Malaya the British had not taken a single Japanese prisoner.

Later, in the company of another newspaperman, I went through a prisoner-of-war camp. I noticed them working in the fields, others were playing football while some were seen going about their chores.

Living accommodations were comfortable, hospital facilities were adequate and even a Christian cemetery laid out, I noted.

What a contrast to our camp in India—and yet these were prisoners of war while we had only been civilian internees.

I talked with a couple of Australians.

"How's everything?" I asked.

"Can't complain," they answered back in an easygoing manner.

I offered them cigarettes and they thanked me. Some of the Australians told me that they liked to work out in the fields since it kept them occupied. One of them told me that he had been a farmer in Queensland before the war.

The guide who accompanied us through the camp was himself an internee who had been repatriated from Australia. He was formerly a resident in Java. As we walked through the camp, both he and I were struck by the contrast in the humane treatment of the Japanese and the British cruelty.

Tanned by the tropical sun yet neat in their khaki shorts and shirts, these prisoners in Singapore are contented and well-cared for. Their only desire is to return home as speedily as possible.

When I motored north recently through the states of Johore, into Malacca and through Negri Sembilan to Kuala Lumpur, capital of Selangor State, I found few marks of the lightning campaign in which the Japanese armed forces swept down the Peninsula in 70 days.

Most of the bridges had been destroyed by the fleeing British troops but like the Johore Causeway, the Japanese

had already wrought miracles of repair. In many instances, the rebuilt Japanese bridges are an improvement over the cumbersome ancient structures which served during the British regime.

If one were to pick out the most striking change that has occurred in the brief period since the British were ousted from Singapore, it is the atmosphere in which the local population works in cooperation with the Japanese authorities.

Today the entire population of Malai has realized what it means to be freed from the fetters of a snobbish British rule. No longer as Malai-born Chinese, Indian, Arab or Malai subjects of Britain's far-flung Empire, but as full-fledged members of the Greater East Asiatic family, they go happily about their daily lives.

Municipal clerks, police constables, firemen and laborers alike find their tasks unchanged from prewar days as they continue their chosen tasks.

No longer is the clerical class bound by British regimentation of class and dress. Today, the Chinese and Eurasian clerks work enthusiastically, with the efficient Japanese giving them full credit for their abilities. This was amply demonstrated by the manner in which bonuses were paid to worthy employees at the end of the first year.

The Japanese administration today is highly centralized and efficient. In the regulation of trade and commerce, registration of professions, in education and public welfare, Shonan today finds itself making remarkable progress.

Schools have reopened, the Shonan Museum and Botanical Garden, under the skilful care of Japanese experts, have been thrown open to the public.

The destitute and crippled are being fed daily at various welfare centers. Special Municipal ambulances make periodical rounds in the slum areas rendering medical care. Illness has been reduced in the city as result of the medical facilities



offered by the Japanese Army and Navy.

In the shops and stores of new Shonan, the clerks smilingly speak in Japanese. Already, the Chinese and Indian businessmen are looking forward to the day when postwar trade will bring them new prosperity. Many of them are eagerly waiting for the day when more Japanese commodities can be sold over their counters.

Enterprising Chinese have turned to production. Local-made products are found on the market—such as Red Palm Oil, a substitute for Cod Liver Oil as a vitamin A and D source, dentrifice and soaps, even locally-made liquors.

The vast resources of Malai and her neighboring islands, now marshalled for Nippon's all-out war effort, yields scrap iron, iron ore, manganese, tungsten, copper, brass, bronze, zinc, tin, lead aluminum, bauxite, wool, cotton, jute bags, leather, rubber, teakwood, pitch, coke, fish oil, benzine, animal oil, resin, latex, turpentine, quinine, coffee, palm oil, copra, rattan and tobacco leaves.

The Japanese Military Administration in Malai and neighboring Sumatra encourage additional padi cultivation while the "grow-more-vegetables" campaign has borne fruit, so to speak, and Malai is well on the road to self-sufficiency.

Long harnessed to the British yoke, many former clerical slaves are turning to other pursuits with the result that many "cottage industries" are developing. Home-made clothes, sweets and cakes are found for sale. A Malai-born Chinese has made his fortune in the manufacture of local cosmetics and dentrifice. Another, a Eurasian, supports his family of seven on the proceeds from his poultry-vegetable farm.

In the Upper Serangoon district, the residents have grouped together for a cooperative barter market. Members of this group, bring their products to be exchanged for foodstuffs and other necessities.

Japanese language schools are popular and in other insti-

tutions, courses in the Japanese language are crowded. The local population have realized that in order to participate fully in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, they must have a command of the leading language of East Asia. There are now more than 20 schools teaching the Japanese language.

In keeping with the well-organized educational policy, newspapers and magazines are now being published in Shonan. The Shonan Shimbun publishes a Japanese edition every morning and an edition in English every afternoon. The Shonan Shimbun made its first appearance on December 8, the first anniversary of the outbreak of the Greater East Asia War. The Shonan Times, fore-runner of the English edition, made its appearance on February 20, five days after the surrender. In addition, the Shonan Shimbun-kai publishes the Shonan Gaho, a monthly pictorial.

The Shonan Nippo, first published on February 21, caters to the reading tastes of the Chinese population. There is also a Chinese monthly magazine carrying articles and comments.

For the Malai community, the Berita Malai (Malai Shimbun) publishes two editions, one in Romanised Malai and one in Jawi script. The Warta Malai was first issued on February 17 and the Utasan Malayu on February 23 by the Army Propaganda Bureau. These were placed under the management of the newly-organized Berita Malai Company on January 1, 1943.

There are three Indian newspapers each serving the needs of the different groups, while "The New Light" magazine reflects Indian opinion. The first Indian newspaper, Azad Hindustan, made its initial appearance on February 21.

Just a word about the Indian Independence League. Because of Shonan's position as the populational center of the Indians in Malai, it is the center of Malai's Independence



Leagues scattered throughout the peninsula.

Today, the Shonan waterfront presents a busy scene. In the harbor are seen ships plying to and from other East Asiatic ports. The harbor facilities, razed by Japanese bombs and British vandalism, have now been rebuilt. New warehouses are rapidly replacing those burned down while in the docks are seen salvaged ships in the process of overhauling.

Dredging work has been completed so that the Singapore harbor can accommodate as many as twenty 10,000-ton ocean-going vessels alongside the wharf. In addition to the larger vessels, the Shonan shipyards are rapidly turning out wooden vessels for inter-island commerce. Even as early as March, the first of the shipyards was in commission.

In the business section of the city, Mitsubishi, Mitsui and other leading Japanese interests have resumed their offices—on a larger scale than in pre-war days. The Yokohama Specie Bank occupies the former Chartered Bank premises overlooking the Bund while the Bank of Taiwan is housed in the new N.T.S. building, sharing it with Domei Tsushinsha.

The Southern Regions Development Bank has already agreed, in principle, upon the remittances between various sections of the Southern Regions and with other parts of Greater East Asia. Soon there will be greater trade between Shonan and the rest of East Asia.

The streets of Shonan are bustling with traffic. Shops are filled and many of the buildings have received well-needed coats of paint and whitewash. There is hardly an empty store in the main section of the city.

And what of its people?

The Japanese brought to Malai many customs and characteristics common to all Asiatics—thus evoking a friendly response of its inhabitants. There is informality of dress and many of the racial groups have reverted to native attire—

both economical and popular.

Freedom of worship has permitted the Mohammedans, Buddhists, Hindus and Christians alike to carry on with their faiths. Bishop Roberts of the Shonan Cathedral is allowed his freedom so that his church may minister to the needs of the Protestants. The Methodist Church, deserted by American missionaries, has been reorganized under Chinese and Indian clergymen. Catholics continue their manifold activities such as churches, schools and convents.

In the field of amusement, the facilities of all cinemas, theaters and amusement parks have been thrown open to all. Lectures, band music and entertainments are offered from time to time by various groups.

In pre-war Singapore, the exclusive British imported many luxuries, chiefly for themselves but often forcing them upon the local population at exorbitant prices. Scarcity of other foodstuffs forced the local inhabitants to buy or else starve.

The Japanese, who subsist like other Asiatics on rice, have assured Malai of a sufficient rice supply while locally-grown agricultural products are increasing.

Today in the streets of Shonan, one finds soldiers and sailors rubbing shoulders with the Chinese and the Indians in the stalls eating Chinese noodles or Malai "satai."

The New World and Great World Amusement Parks have been reopened. Cabarets are permitted—there are three in Shonan today, the Great World, Great East Asia and Air-View. Formerly the haunts of evil elements and drunken British soldiers, today they form one of the amusement centers for the entire population. Restaurants and cafes flourish, for the Japanese, like their Asiatic co-workers, like to relax after a hard day's work with a nourishing meal in pleasant surroundings.

The Shonan Rubber Association and the Shonan Commo-



dities Distribution Association as well as various Chinese and Indian guilds work together in the regulation of trade. Frenzied business competition no longer exists. Today every one works together to maintain an equitable price level—despite wartime restrictions.

The Japanese Military Administration in Malai and neighboring Sumatra is exerting fullest efforts in the self-sufficiency program which is designed to have the peninsula produce all the materials needed by the inhabitants. A three-year project has been formulated to make Malai self-sufficient in rice, vegetables, coffee, fruits and tobacco. Wastelands and swamps are being cleared and drained. Modern agricultural technique, insecticide and suitable farming implements are being used to raise the quality of rice.

In the past British authorities were not concerned with the production of rice since they were only interested in exploitation. Thus primitive agricultural methods continued to prevail but the advent of the Japanese has resulted in the modernization of padi-cultivation.

Measures for increasing rice production are being taken in various States. In Kedah State, rice production was expanded by 15 per cent over last year. Irrigation projects are also under way. Kelantan State expects a production increase of 30 per cent. Johore State has announced that it will convert approximately 75,000 chobu into padi-fields.

There is an increased interest of the local people in the production of foodstuffs. At the Farmers' Institute in Negri Sembilan, strenuous training is carried out to instill farming spirit in the people.

The fall of Singapore and the subsequent birth of Shonan has wrought a transformation in the attitude of the local inhabitants.

One young Chinese businessman told me after my re-

turn from India:

"Never again will the Anglo-American imperialists be able to rule us. We have seen them in defeat, we have seen them humbled—how the mighty have fallen."

And that is entirely due to the example set by the intrepid Japanese Forces.

The former Shanghai-Chinese wife of a British resident ruefully admitted:

"I shall never trust the British again. They left us all helpless while they field in terror for their lives."

These statements typify the attitude of the average Chinese in Shonan today.

No longer do the wealthy Chinese, Indian or Arab ape the British and Americans. Today, shedding illusions of pompous grandeur, many have returned to the simple life of their country.

Shonan, in the short period since its birth, has rid itself of Anglo-American influences. A brighter spirit prevails among the population. No longer do the Malai and the Chinese worker cringe in terror at British brutality.

When spoken to, the Chinese clerks, Malai police and Indian watchmen snap briskly to attention. In former days these oppressed inhabitants were indolent, sullen—and inefficient. Instead of idling away the hours basking in the sun, today, the revitalized Malai studies industriously in one of the many trade schools. The Malai, his heritage regained, once more confidently shares in the future and prosperity of his own native land.

Thus today Shonan has emerged from its period of reconstruction and looks confidently toward the future. Today the people of Shonan cooperate in a spirit of friendliness, not only with the Japanese officials, but among themselves. Racial community squabbles are a thing of the past, for the task which faces Malai today is to take its rightful place in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.



Shonan as the sentinel of the Southern Regions is ever on the watch to guard zealously her newly-won freedom and promise of bright future.

## Epilogue

This is being written in Tokyo in the midst of the most crucial war in Nippon's long history. Round about, I find ample proof of the grim determination and will to win which characterize the indomitable spirit of the Japanese nation in the current War of Greater East Asia.

What has impressed me more than anything else during the past few months in Tokyo is the quiet, determined manner in which the Japanese people cooperate on the home front.

On the war front, I have talked with the soldiers. They fight with the same conviction and determination to rid East Asia, once and for all, of insidious Anglo-American influences.

In the Southern Regions, I have seen the ideal of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in action, have witnessed Overseas Chinese, Filipinos, Indonesians, Indians and Burmese willingly cooperate with the Japanese authorities.

Japan has set the lead for the rest of East Asia's millions in this Greater East Asia War—which sounds the death-knell of Anglo-American imperialism and the battlecry for the liberated Asiatics.

In the Philippines, freed from the selfish American policy, the people are now able to work out their own national destiny in keeping with their true Oriental heritage. The Burmese, under the capable leadership of Ba Maw, is on the threshold of independence.

While in Java, Sumatra and Malai, the Indonesians are finding a new lease on life through the energetic leadership of the Japanese authorities. In the short course of one year, these regions have wiped out the oppression of century-old British and Dutch tyranny.



True, there may be many difficult days ahead until brighter days of peace shall reign again in our own East Asia. But till then, the Japanese and their fellow-Asiatics must wholeheartedly work together for final victory.

Tokyo today is fast becoming the Mecca for all East Asia. In the years to come, it shall be the center of a new East Asiatic culture. Already, there is a fusion of Chinese, Thai, Filipino, Burmese and Indian cultures in the Southern Regions.

These are indeed critical days for Japan for in common with the rest of East Asia the future happiness of millions is at stake. To be working in the midst of this titanic struggle is the greatest experience of all.

In a few days, I shall return to the South where I have spent so many years under the shadow of British Imperialism. I shall take back with me a message of hope and encouragement for the peoples of the Southern Regions. I shall tell them of the determination and will to win that predominates in Japanese life in wartime Tokyo.

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